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American Library Association
PUBLISHING BOARD
LIBRARY TRACT, No. 1.

WHY DO WE NEED A PUBLIC LIBRARY

EXTRACTS FROM PAPERS AND ADDRESSES

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No. 1-5

COMPILED BY A COMMITTEE OF THE AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

PUBLISHED FOR THE
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American Library Association
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Jan. 5, 1901
B.

PUBLIC LIBRARY
OF THE
CITY OF BOSTON

WHY DO WE NEED A PUBLIC LIBRARY?

WHAT A FREE LIBRARY DOES FOR A COUNTRY TOWN.

Connecticut Public Library Document, 1895.

1. It keeps boys at home in the evening by giving them well-written stories of adventure.

2. It gives teachers and pupils interesting books to aid their school work in history and geography, and makes better citizens of them by enlarging their knowledge of their country and its growth.

3. It provides books on the care of children and animals, cookery and housekeeping, building and gardening, and teaches young readers how to make simple dynamos, telephones, and other machines.

4. It helps clubs that are studying history, literature, or life in other countries, and throws light upon Sunday-school lessons.

5. It furnishes books of selections for reading aloud, suggestions for entertainments and home amusements, and hints on correct speech and good manners.

6. It teaches the names and habits of the plants, birds, and insects of the neighborhood, and the differences in soil and rocks.

7. It tells the story of the town from its settlement, and keeps a record of all important events in its history.

8. It offers pleasant and wholesome stories to readers of all ages.

THE MISSION OF THE BOOK.

J. N. Larned.

There are people who may assent to all that is said of education in the life-lasting view of it, who will deny that there is a question in it of books. "We," they say, "find more for our instruction in life than in books. The reality of things interests us more and teaches us more than the report and description of them by others. We study men among men and God's works in the midst of them. We prefer to take knowledge at first hand, from nature and from society, rather than second-handedly, out of a printed page. Your book wisdom is from the closet and for closet use. It is not the kind needed in a busy and breezy world." Well, there is a half-truth in this which must not be ignored. To make everything of books in the development of men and women is a greater mistake perhaps than to make nothing of them. For life has teachings, and nature out-of-doors has teachings, for which no man, if he misses them, can find compensation in books. We can say that, frankly, to the contemner of books, and we yield no ground in doing so; for then we turn upon him and say: "Your life, sir, to which you look for all the enlightenment of soul and mind that you receive, is a brief span of a few tens of years; the circle of human acquaintance in which you are satisfied to make your whole study of mankind is a little company of a few hundred men and women, at the most; the natural world from which you think to take sufficient lessons with your unassisted eyes is made up of some few bits of city streets and country lanes and seaside sands. What can you, sir, know of life, compared with the man who has had equal years of breath and consciousness with you, and who puts with that experience some large, wide knowledge of forty centuries of human history in the whole round world besides? What can you know of mankind and human

nature compared with the man who meets and talks with as many of his neighbors in the flesh as yourself and who, beyond that, has companionship and communion of mind with the kingly and queenly ones of all the generations that are dead? What can you learn from nature compared with him who has Darwin and Dana and Huxley and Tyndall and Gray for his tutors when he walks abroad, and who, besides the home-rambling which he shares with you, can go bird-watching with John Burroughs up and down the Atlantic States, or roaming with Thoreau in Maine woods, or strolling with Richard Jefferies in English lanes and fields?"

Truth is, the bookless man does not understand his own loss. He does not know the leanness in which his mind is kept by want of the food which he rejects. He does not know what starving of imagination and of thought he has inflicted upon himself. He has suffered his interest in the things which make up God's knowable universe to shrink until it reaches no farther than his eyes can see and his ears can hear. The books which he scorns are the telescopes and reflectors and reverberators of our intellectual life, holding in themselves a hundred magical powers for the overcoming of space and time, and for giving the range of knowledge which belongs to a really cultivated mind. There is no equal substitute for them. There is nothing else which will so break for us the poor hobble of everyday sights and sounds and habits and tasks, by which our thinking and feeling are naturally tethered to a little worn round.

THE FUTURE OF THE PUBLIC LIBRARY.

J. N. Larned.

If it has been our privilege to see, and for some in our circle to bear a part in, the beginnings of the active educational work of the libraries, I am persuaded that it is only

the beginnings we have witnessed as yet. I am persuaded that the public library of the future will transcend our dreams in its penetrating influence. Consider for a moment what it is, and what it offers to the energies of education which a desperate necessity is awakening and organizing in the world! It is a store, a reservoir, of the new knowledge of the latest day and the ripened wisdom of the long past. To carry into the memory and into the thought of all the people who surround it, in a town, even some little part of what it holds of instructed reasoning and instructed feeling, would be to civilize that community beyond the highest experience of civilization that mankind has yet attained to. There is nothing that stands equally beside it as a possible agent of common culture. It is the one fountain of intellectual life which cannot be exhausted; which need not be channeled for any fortunate few; which can be generously led to the filling of every cup, of every capacity for old or young. There is little in it to tempt the befouling hand of the politician, and it offers no gain to the mercantile adventurer. For those who serve it on behalf of the public there are few allurements of money or fame. Its vast powers for good are so little exposed to seduction or corruption that it seems to give promises for the future which are safer and surer than any others that society can build hopes upon.

THE PUBLIC LIBRARY A CIVIC CENTRE.

W. E. Foster.

In more than one locality the local public library has come to be recognized as the natural local centre of the community, around which revolve the local studies, the local industries, and all the various local interests of the town or village. Here, for instance, is the home of the local historical or antiquarian society; here also is the home of the local camera club; of the natural history society;

of the schoolmasters' club, etc. Why is this? It is because those in charge of the library have so thoroughly realized the fact that in a community the interests of all are the interests of each, and that while this is true of other institutions as related to each other,— of the natural history museum, for instance, as related to the public schools, — yet there is no one of them on which the lines of interest so invariably converge from all the others — as "all roads lead to Rome."

There is one more point of view on which I would like to touch briefly; namely, the steps preceding the opening of a public library. How shall we best develop interest in the community under these conditions? Here the question is how most effectively to place before the community the possibilities of such an institution, still largely an unknown institution to the most of the community. Obviously, in thus proceeding from the known to the unknown all possible agencies should be utilized which may tend to make the matter real to the people. If a public meeting is to be held, any speaker from abroad who is to address it should be one who has been in vital contact with the beneficent influences of a well-directed public library, and can speak feelingly and from first-hand experience with it. Both "sides" of this experience, so to speak, should be represented. That is to say, it will be well to hear, not only from the librarian of a library which has been making a place for itself in the affections of a community, but from some beneficiary of the library's good offices, — some teacher, for instance, who can speak from experience, not merely of what the library has aimed to accomplish, but of what it actually has accomplished in his own experience time and time again. In every such community, moreover, where no public library has yet been established, there are likely to be some persons, whether teachers or others, who, having been accustomed elsewhere to the benefits of a public library, can speak feelingly of the deprivation experienced

on coming to a new community where none exists. Such public-spirited citizens will be among the best and most effective missionaries of the new movement. Your community, moreover, will constitute a rather marked exception to communities generally if you do not find the local press ready and willing to coöperate in all these measures, and to open its columns to testimonies such as I have instanced.

Lastly, care and judicious attention will be needed when the library is fairly opened and during the first few months of its operation, until, in short, it is well past what may be called the "broken reed and smoking flax" period. If I were to be asked what is the most frequent occasion for failure or flagging interest here, I should reply: "The too common practice of building and equipping the library first, and engaging the librarian second;" and thus relying upon the books, unaided, to present their effective influence upon the community. No mistake could be greater, as may be seen from those instances in which the well-directed effectiveness of the librarian's personality has counted for so much. At the outset, when novelty is a leading motive, much reliance may appropriately be had on the fresh interest of current periodicals, and of the latest published books; but a library which should remain indefinitely in this stage, as a chronic condition, would be like a child who has grown into manhood without abandoning his childish toys. Novelty, recreation, serviceableness, these three, — all these are legitimate and appropriate aims at some time in the development of a public library; but the third has a potency in establishing the library in the deep affections of the community to which the other two can never approach. At the end of ten years it will not be so much the number of people whom the library's books have amused, as those who have found it capable of rendering them a real and most appreciated service, to which its officers will look with pleasure and satisfaction.

BOOKS AND THE PUBLIC LIBRARY.

James Russell Lowell, 1885.

The opening of a free public library, then, is a most important event in the history of any town. A college training is an excellent thing; but, after all, the better part of every man's education is that which he gives himself, and it is for this that a good library should furnish the opportunity and the means. I have sometimes thought that our public schools undertook to teach too much, and that the older system, which taught merely the three R's, and taught them well, leaving natural selection to decide who should go farther, was the better. However this may be, all that is primarily needful in order to use a library is the ability to read. I say primarily, for there must also be the inclination, and after that, some guidance in reading well. Formerly the duty of a librarian was considered too much that of a watchdog, to keep people as much as possible away from the books, and to hand these over to his successor as little worn by use as he could. Librarians now, it is pleasant to see, have a different notion of their trust, and are in the habit of preparing, for the direction of the inexperienced, lists of such books as they think best worth reading. Cataloguing has also, thanks in great measure to American librarians, become a science, and catalogues, ceasing to be labyrinths without a clue, are furnished with finger-posts at every turn. Subject catalogues again save the beginner a vast deal of time and trouble by supplying him for nothing with one at least of the results of thorough scholarship, the knowing where to look for what he wants. I do not mean by this that there is or can be any short cut to learning, but that there may be, and is, such a short cut to information that will make learning more easily accessible.

But have you ever rightly considered what the mere

ability to read means? That it is the key which admits us to the whole world of thought and fancy and imagination; to the company of saint and sage, of the wisest and the wittiest at their wisest and wittiest moment? That it enables us to see with the keenest eyes, hear with the finest ears, and listen to the sweetest voices of all time? More than that, it annihilates time and space for us; it revives for us without a miracle the Age of Wonder, endowing us with the shoes of swiftness and the cap of darkness, so that we walk invisible like fern-seed, and witness unharmed the plague at Athens or Florence or London; accompany Cæsar on his marches, or look in on Catiline in council with his fellow-conspirators, or Guy Fawkes in the cellar of St. Stephen's. We often hear of people who will descend to any servility, submit to any insult, for the sake of getting themselves or their children into what is euphemistically called good society. Did it ever occur to them that there is a select society of all the centuries to which they and theirs can be admitted for the asking, a society, too, which will not involve them in ruinous expense, and still more ruinous waste of time and health and faculties? . . .

One is sometimes asked by young people to recommend a course of reading. My advice would be that they should confine themselves to the supreme books in whatever literature, or still better to choose some one great author, and make themselves thoroughly familiar with him. For, as all roads lead to Rome, so do they likewise lead away from it, and you will find that, in order to understand perfectly and weigh exactly any vital piece of literature, you will be gradually and pleasantly persuaded to excursions and explorations of which you little dreamed when you began, and will find yourselves scholars before you are aware. For remember that there is nothing less profitable than scholarship for the mere sake of scholarship, nor anything more wearisome in the attainment. But the moment you have a definite aim, attention is quickened, the mother of

memory, and all that you acquire groups and arranges itself in an order that is lucid, because everywhere and always it is in intelligent relation to a central object of constant and growing interest. This method also forces upon us the necessity of thinking, which is, after all, the highest result of all education. For what we want is not learning, but knowledge; that is, the power to make learning answer its true end as a quickener of intelligence and a widener of our intellectual sympathies. . . .

I have been speaking of such books as should be chosen for profitable reading. A public library, of course, must be far wider in its scope. It should contain something for all tastes, as well as the material for a thorough grounding in all branches of knowledge. It should be rich in books of reference, in encyclopædias, where one may learn without cost of research what things are generally known. For it is far more useful to know these than to know those that are *not* generally known. Not to know them is the defect of those half-trained and therefore hasty men who find a mare's nest on every branch of the tree of knowledge. A library should contain ample stores of history, which, if it do not always deserve the pompous title which Bolingbroke gave it, of philosophy teaching by example, certainly teaches many things profitable for us to know and lay to heart; teaches, among other things, how much of the present is still held in mortmain by the past; teaches that, if there be no controlling purpose, there is, at least, a sternly logical sequence in human affairs, and that chance has but a trifling dominion over them; teaches why things are and must be so and not otherwise; . . . teaches, perhaps, more than anything else, the value of personal character as a chief factor in what used to be called destiny, for that cause is strong which has not a multitude but one strong man behind it. History is, indeed, mainly the biography of a few imperial men, and forces home upon us the useful lesson how infinitesimally important our own private affairs are to the universe

in general. History is clarified experience, and yet how little do men profit by it; nay, how should we expect it of those who so seldom are taught anything by their own! Delusions, especially economical delusions, seem the only things that have any chance of an earthly immortality. I would have plenty of biography. It is no insignificant fact that eminent men have always loved their Plutarch, since example, whether for emulation or avoidance, is never so poignant as when presented to us in a striking personality. Autobiographies are also instructive reading to the student of human nature, though generally written by men who were more interesting to themselves than to their fellow-men. I have been told that Emerson and George Eliot agreed in thinking Rousseau's "Confessions" the most interesting book they had ever read.

A public library should also have many and full shelves of political economy, for the dismal science, as Carlyle called it, if it prove nothing else, will go far towards proving that theory is the bird in the bush, though she sing more sweetly than the nightingale, and that the millennium will not hasten its coming in deference to the most convincing string of resolutions that were ever unanimously adopted in public meeting. It likewise induces in us a profound and wholesome distrust of social panaceas.

I would have a public library abundant in translations of the best books in all languages, for, though no work of genius can be adequately translated, because every word of it is permeated with what Milton calls "the precious life-blood of a master spirit," which cannot be transfused into the veins of the best translation, yet some acquaintance with foreign and ancient literatures has the liberalizing effect of foreign travel. He who travels by translation travels more hastily and superficially, but brings home something that is worth having, nevertheless. Translations properly used, by shortening the labor of acquisition, add as many years to our lives as they subtract from the processes of our education. . . .

In such a library the sciences should be fully represented, that men may at least learn to know in what a marvellous museum they live, what a wonder-worker is giving them an exhibition daily for nothing. Nor let Art be forgotten in all its many forms, not as the antithesis of Science, but as her elder or fairer sister, whom we love all the more that her usefulness cannot be demonstrated in dollars and cents. I should be thankful if every day-laborer among us could have his mind illumined, as those of Athens and of Florence had, with some image of what is best in architecture, painting, and sculpture, to train his crude perceptions and perhaps call out latent faculties. I should like to see the works of Ruskin within the reach of every artisan among us. For I hope some day that the delicacy of touch and accuracy of eye that have made our mechanics in some departments the best in the world may give us the same supremacy in works of wider range and more purely ideal scope.

Voyages and travels I would also have, good store, especially the earlier, when the world was fresh and unhackneyed and men saw things invisible to the modern eye. They are fast-sailing ships to waft away from present trouble to the Fortunate Isles.

To wash down the drier morsels that every library must necessarily offer at its board, let there be plenty of imaginative literature, and let its range be not too narrow to stretch from Dante to the elder Dumas. The world of the imagination is not the world of abstraction and nonentity, as some conceive, but a world formed out of chaos by a sense of the beauty that is in man and the earth on which he dwells. It is the realm of Might-be, our haven of refuge from the shortcomings and disillusions of life. It is, to quote Spenser, who knew it well — "the world's sweet inn from care and wearisome turmoil." Do we believe, then, that God gave us in mockery this splendid faculty of sympathy with things that are a joy forever? For my part, I believe

that the love and study of works of imagination is of practical utility in a country so profoundly material (or, as we like to call it, practical) in its leading tendencies as ours. The hunger after purely intellectual delights, the content with ideal possessions, cannot but be good for us in maintaining a wholesome balance of the character and of the faculties. I for one shall never be persuaded that Shakespeare left a less useful legacy to his countrymen than Watt. We hold all the deepest, all the highest satisfactions of life as tenants of imagination. Nature will keep up the supply of what are called hardheaded people without our help, and, if it come to that, there are other as good uses for heads as at the end of battering-rams.

I know that there are many excellent people who object to the reading of novels as a waste of time, if not as otherwise harmful. But I think they are trying to outwit nature, who is sure to prove cunninger than they. Look at children. One boy shall want a chest of tools, and one a book, and of those who want books one shall ask for a botany, another for a romance. They will be sure to get what they want, and we are doing a grave wrong to their morals by driving them to do things on the sly, to steal that food which their constitution craves and which is wholesome for them, instead of having it freely and frankly given them as the wisest possible diet. If we cannot make a silk purse out of a sow's ear, so neither can we hope to succeed with the opposite experiment. But we may spoil the silk for its legitimate uses. I can conceive of no healthier reading for a boy, or girl either, than Scott's novels, or Cooper's, to speak only of the dead. I have found them very good reading at least for one young man, for one middle-aged man, and for one who is growing old. No, no — banish the "Antiquary," banish "Leather Stocking," and banish all the world! Let us not go about to make life duller than it is. . . .

I have great pleasure in believing that the custom of

giving away money during their lifetime (and there is nothing harder for most men to part with, except prejudice) is more common with Americans than with any other people. It is a still greater pleasure to see that the favorite direction of their beneficence is towards the founding of colleges and libraries. My observation has led me to believe that there is no country in which wealth is so sensible of its obligations as our own. And as most of our rich men have risen from the ranks, may we not fairly attribute this sympathy with their kind to the benign influence of democracy rightly understood? . . . This is the healthy side of that good nature which democracy tends to foster, and which is so often harmful when it has its root in indolence or indifference; especially harmful where our public affairs are concerned, and where it is easiest, because there we are giving away what belongs to other people. In this country it is as laudably easy to procure signatures to a subscription paper as it is shamefully so to obtain them for certificates of character and recommendations to office. And is not this public spirit a national evolution from that frame of mind in which New England was colonized, and which found expression in these grave words of Robinson and Brewster: "We are knit together as a body in a most strict and sacred bond and covenant of the Lord, of the violation of which we make great conscience, and by virtue whereof we hold ourselves strictly tied to all care of each other's good and of the whole"? Let us never forget the deep and solemn import of these words. The problem before us is to make a whole of our many discordant parts, our many foreign elements; and I know of no way in which this can better be done than by providing a common system of education, and a common door of access to the best books by which that education may be continued, broadened, and made fruitful. For it is certain that, whatever we do or leave undone, those discordant parts and foreign elements are to be, whether we will or no, members of that body which Rob-

inson and Brewster had in mind, bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh, for good or ill. . . .

There is no way in which a man can build so secure and lasting a monument for himself as in a public library. Upon that he may confidently allow "Resurgam" to be carved, for, through his good deed, he will rise again in the grateful remembrance and in the lifted and broadened minds and fortified characters of generation after generation. The pyramids may forget their builders, but memorials such as this have longer memories.

THE LIBRARY AND CULTURE.

W. I. Fletcher.

We hear much of the library as a part of the educational apparatus of the town and the state. Yes, it is indeed that, but it is more and other than that. To my mind it should stand for culture rather than education in the narrow sense; and culture, it is now coming to be recognized, is to be had through recreation, as well as through tasks and through study. An article in the *Atlantic Monthly* takes the ground that all education up to high school age should consist of gymnastics, music, manual training, free-hand drawing, and language, mainly English, possibly a little French. This proposed "new programme in education," as the writer calls it, while it is too radical to meet acceptance at present, is in a line with much of the thought of the day, which recognizes the cultural value of the æsthetic and the pleasurable.

There is nothing out of place in the comparing of the library to the school and the college, but its true mission is not to be so limited. To a large extent it is to be compared, as an object of public care and expense, with the park, the modern common, where there are flower-beds, rare plants in conservatories, lakes with boats in summer and skating in winter, and music by excellent bands. Not very strictly

useful, these things, but recognized everywhere as ministering to the real culture of the people. Let this library, then, be the place where you will come not merely to study and store your minds with so-called "useful" knowledge, but also often to have a good time; to refresh your minds and hearts with humor and poetry and fiction. Let the boys find here wholesome books of adventure, and tales such as a boy likes; let the girls find the stories which delight them and give their fancy and imagination exercise; let the tired housewife find the novels which will transport her to an ideal realm of love and happiness; let the hard-worked man, instead of being expected always to read "improving" books of history or politics, choose that which will give him relaxation of mind and nerve, — perhaps the Innocents Abroad, or Josh Billings's "Allminax," or Samanthy at Saratoga.

THE LIBRARY'S EDUCATIONAL MISSION.

Melvil Dewey.

The librarian's educational motto. — To the great mass of boys and girls the school can barely give the tools with which to get an education after they are forced to begin their life work as breadwinners. Few are optimistic enough to hope that we can change this condition very rapidly. The great problem of the day is, therefore, to carry on the education after the elementary steps have been taken in the free public schools. There are numerous agencies at work in this direction, — reading rooms, reference and lending libraries, museums, summer, vacation and night schools, correspondence and other forms of extension teaching; but by far the greatest agent is good reading. An educational system which contents itself with teaching to read and then fails to see that the best reading is provided, when undesirable reading is so cheap and plentiful as to be a constant menace to the public good, is, as Huxley wisely said,

as inconsistent and absurd as to teach our children the expert use of the knife, fork, and spoon, and then provide them with no food. The most important movement before the professional educators to-day is the broadening going on so rapidly in their conception of their duties to their profession and to the public. Too many have thought of their work as limited to schools for the young during a short period of tuition. The true conception is that we should be responsible for higher as well as elementary education, for adults as well as for children, for educational work in the homes as well as in the schoolhouses, and during life as well as for a limited course. In a nutshell, the motto of the extended work should be "higher education for adults, at home, during life."

THE FREEDOM OF BOOKS.

J. N. Larned.

The free town library is wholly a product of the last half-century. It is the crowning creature of democracy for its own higher culture. There is nothing conceivable to surpass it as an agency in popular education. Schools, colleges, lectures, classes, clubs, and societies, scientific and literary, are tributaries to it, — primaries, feeders. It takes up the work of all of them to utilize it, to carry it on, and make more of it. Future time will perfect it, and will perfect the institutions out of which and over which it has grown; but it is not possible for the future to bring any new gift of enlightenment to men that will be greater, in kind, than the free diffusion of thought and knowledge as stored in the better literature of the world.

The last half of the nineteenth century would seem to be a late time in history for realizing the freedom of books. For if we consider, we must see that there is no earthly thing, except the solid earth itself, and its waters and its air, that is so truly and plainly a common heritage of man-

kind as the matter of the books that have come down from past times. If there were heritable rights in the whole public to some great store of bodily food, and they were half as clear as its heirship to these meats of the spirit and the mind, we may be sure that its claim to them would never have slept so long. Suppose that in every generation there had been given to a few men and women some endowment of extraordinary power, which perpetuated life without decay and fruitfulness without ceasing in each seed and root that was put into the earth by their hands, so that harvests from their sowing were perennial to the end of time, and that people to-day were gathering grapes from vines that had ripened in the days of Pharaohs! Can we doubt that such a cumulative ancestral gift as that would have been made common property, with equal free sharing, long ages ago? But the nature of our literary inheritance from the past is exactly that. The true literature that we garner in our libraries of books is the deathless thought, the immortal truth, the imperishable quickenings and revelations which genius — the rare gift to now and then one of the human race — has been frugally, steadily planting in the fertile soil of written speech, from the generations of the hymn-writers of the Euphrates and the Indus to the generations now alive. As I look at it, there is nothing save the air we breathe that we have common rights in so sacred and so clear, and there is no other public treasure which so reasonably demands to be kept and cared for and distributed for common enjoyment at common cost.

If we marvel at the tardiness with which even the foremost peoples have recognized their literary inheritance, and the common rights and duties attaching to it, we do but rejoice the more that they have come to the recognition at last. In my belief it is the keystone now slipping to its place in the slowly rounded arch of our modern civilization. Free education and free books in a free democracy, — that is the system of an enduring social structure. The future

may put carvings of wonderful beauty upon our arch, and build temples and palaces and towers that rise to heaven upon it; but what we do now is the work that will have given solidity and security to the whole.

Free corn in old Rome bribed a mob and kept it passive. By free books and what goes with them in modern America we mean to erase the mob from existence. There lies the cardinal difference between a civilization which perished and a civilization that will endure.

THE LIBRARY FOR RECREATION.

Sir Walter Besant.

The public library is an adult school; it is a perpetual and lifelong continuation class; it is the greatest educational factor that we have; and the librarian is becoming our most important teacher and guide. The dream of the Heavy Moralist is that in opening a free library you are persuading the workingman to become a student in science, history, or language. He himself, if you please (the Heavy Moralist), goes every day to his office and does six hours of work, broken by a lunch which occupies an hour. He then goes home, dines at half past seven, and spends the evening with a little music, a little game of cards, a little light reading, a little talk. His sons do the same. Does he expect his sons to spend their evenings in learning quantities of fine things, all for the pure love of knowledge? Certainly not. Yet he will talk glibly about the workingman, who has had a nine hours' day of hard work, taking advantage of the free library for purposes of self-improvement. This is not hypocrisy: it is stupidity. What the average workingman wants is exactly what the Heavy Moralist and his sons want, — an evening of quiet rest and recreation, — and if he finds it in the company of Walter Scott, Dickens, Marryatt, Thackeray, Fielding, Smollett, Defoe, Wilkie Collins, Charles Reade, George Eliot, not to speak of living men and women, should we not rejoice?

WHY MR. CARNEGIE FOUNDS FREE LIBRARIES.

Andrew Carnegie.

I choose free libraries as the best agencies for improving the masses of the people, because they give nothing for nothing. They only help those who help themselves. They never pauperize. They reach the aspiring, and open to these the chief treasures of the world — those stored up in books. A taste for reading drives out lower tastes.

Besides this, I believe good fiction one of the most beneficial reliefs to the monotonous lives of the poor. For these and other reasons I prefer the free public library to most if not any other agencies for the happiness and improvement of a community.

THE MODERN LIBRARY MOVEMENT.

Joseph LeRoy Harrison.

And now what is the modern library movement? What is its moving thought, its scope, its purpose, its aspirations? The modern library movement is a movement to increase by every possible means the accessibility of books, to stimulate their reading, and to create a demand for the best. Its motive is helpfulness; its scope, instruction and recreation; its purpose, the enlightenment of all; its aspirations, still greater usefulness. It is a distinctive movement, because it recognizes, as never before, the infinite possibilities of the public library, and because it has done everything within its power to develop those possibilities.

Among the peculiar relations that a library sustains to a community, which the movement has made clear and greatly advanced, are its relations to the school and university extension. The education of an individual is coincident with the life of that individual. It is carried on by the influences and appliances of the family, vocation, gov-

ernment, the church, the press, the school, and the library. The library is unsectarian, and hence occupies a field independent of the church. It furnishes a foundation for an intelligent reading of paper and magazine. It is the complement and supplement of the school, coöperating with the teacher in the work of educating the child, and furnishing the means for continuing that education after the child has gone out from the school. These are important relations. From the beginning the child is taught the value of books. In the kindergarten period he learns that they contain beautiful pictures; in the grammar grades they do much to make history and geography attractive; in the high school they are indispensable as works of reference.

Few of those who enter the public schools become academic pupils, but they have been taught to read, and are graduated into the world in possession of a power of almost infinite possibilities. It is as the means by which that power may be developed that the supplemental work of the library begins. Were it not for the library, the education of the masses would, in most cases, cease when the doors of the school swing in after them for the last time; but it keeps those doors wide open, and is, in the truest sense of the word, the university of the people. The library is as much a part of the educational system of a community as the public school, and is coming more and more to be regarded with the same respect and supported in the same generous manner. It is not necessary to consider here the means which have been employed to increase the usefulness of the library in this respect; but sufficient to say that it is constantly increasing, that librarians are fully alive to this function of the library, and their efforts are being ably seconded by all educators.

The relation of the library to university extension is perhaps even closer than its relation to the public school, for its character makes it the most natural local centre of this form of education, and often its organizing force. . . .

To-day the relation between the library and university extension is firmly established, and in a natural stage of development. With its class rooms and lecture rooms, its books and its reference lists, its intelligent librarian and studious atmosphere, the library provides university extension with an attractive and appropriate home; and university extension, on its part, furnishes the library with that which it most covets, an added constituency.

These are but two of the many ways by which the public library is endeavoring to serve the public. The modern library spirit has found within the expansive walls of the institution possibilities which half a century ago were not even dreamed of, and is directing all its energy to finding the means of realizing these possibilities. . . .

The public library of to-day is an active, potential force, serving the present, and silently helping to develop the civilization of the future. The spirit of the modern library movement which surrounds it is thoroughly catholic, thoroughly progressive, and thoroughly in sympathy with the people. It believes that the true function of the library is to serve the people, and that the only test of success is usefulness.

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LIBRARY TRACT, No. 2

HOW TO START A PUBLIC LIBRARY

BY

DR. G. E. WIRE

Worcester County Law Library

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PUBLISHED FOR THE

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CONTINUED ON BACK COVER.

Jan. 5, 1900.
B.

HOW TO START A PUBLIC LIBRARY

DR. G. E. WIRE, WORCESTER COUNTY LAW LIBRARY

First, find out what public library legislation is on your state statute books. It is unwise to begin on uncertainty. Most of our States now have permissive public library laws, and one at least has a mandatory law. The Illinois law is cited as the best of the direct tax laws; Massachusetts is cited as a good example of the direct grant law. Other good laws are those of New Jersey for small cities and townships, and that of Wisconsin allowing books to circulate outside the corporate limits on certain conditions.

The essential features of the Illinois public library law are these: Cities are allowed to levy a tax of not to exceed two mills on the dollar, and in cities of one hundred thousand inhabitants this shall not exceed one mill on the dollar; directors are appointed by the mayor and confirmed by the council, with the usual provision for overlapping terms; the directors have exclusive control of library funds, of the administration of the library, and of buying real estate; all persons are free to use the library; directors must make an annual report and have power to accept gifts. Villages have somewhat more restricted powers, and directors are elective.

The Massachusetts law is very simple, having only three sections — giving authority to the town or city to establish a library; to grant and vote money for a library, and to turn over to such library, books, reports, and laws which have been received from the State. A section in the dog-license law provides that after all claims for losses have

been settled the residue is to go back to the towns for libraries or schools. Many of the town libraries are thus supported by the dogs.

It will readily be seen that the Illinois law is superior in that it provides a direct and special tax for the library, and in some cases this is not to be reckoned into the whole amount of taxation to be raised by the township or village. This amount of taxation has, however, been reduced by some city boards ; but on the whole it is better than a law allowing only a sum of money to be granted, leaving the amount to the discretion and generosity of the authorities. Libraries are being rapidly built up in Illinois, and this law has been widely copied in the Mississippi Valley, and other States still further west.

Suppose now familiarity with the law to have been obtained. The next step is to AGITATE, AGITATE, AGITATE, and keep on agitating.

To begin at the beginning, first hold a meeting of a few friends at some residence and agree on what is wanted, then start public meetings. Have some speeches by home talent, and if possible, some by outsiders on the benefits of public libraries. Let all the professions, law, medicine, and teaching, all the clergy and literary men and women, make common cause in the library interest.

All possible publicity must be given the movement. First, as to the press. The local papers should all be enlisted in the cause if possible, and articles setting forth the advantage of public libraries should appear in their columns. The benefits of public libraries, as supplementing the work of the public schools, should also be emphasized. Then dodgers and handbills should be used. This latter procedure, of course, is clearly necessary on the eve of an election for adopting a library law. Circulars by mail or messenger should also be employed, bringing home the matter to many people who may not be in touch with public affairs. Wall posters might be used, although this may be regarded as an

extreme measure. Mass meetings addressed by enthusiasts on the subject are the most popular form of reaching the public. Let the meeting be well advertised in the papers, by dodgers and posters as well as by announcements from pulpits and elsewhere. The largest hall in town or the largest church should be engaged, well-lighted, comfortable, with plenty of good music, and plenty of enthusiastic speakers. The speeches should be short, interspersed with music. Another plan is to have some eminent library specialist address the meeting at some length. Different methods reach different constituencies. Library sermons may be used with effect. Many good people may be reached in this way who might not be reached in others. A library fair will not only attract much attention to the library which is to be, but also will gain some money for it. In the close work of a campaign, a house-to-house canvass may be necessary. This should be done thoroughly by tactful persons, otherwise more harm than good will result. The men's clubs and the women's clubs should also be enlisted in the propaganda. Different methods will apply to them, but they should all take a hand in the work. The men's clubs represent the wealth and influence, social and political, of the community; the women's clubs represent society and the social element. Both are valuable allies in the work of agitation. Indeed, the women's clubs in many parts of the country are of the greatest aid in this work, for they have constant need of a public library for reference purposes. They make good advocates and good canvassers for the cause.

Local pride and emulation also help wonderfully, as in cases where a neighboring town has a useful and well managed public library.

All of these forces must pull together and keep at it, in order to create a sentiment for a public library, and in some cases this must continue for months and even years. Apathy of the most lamentable kind frequently prevails,

and all sorts of arguments are used to bolster up the opposition. The expense, the additional taxation, is of course one of the first objections to be met. The individual expense is rarely figured out; but when it is it will be found to be so low as to make objection on this ground untenable. Five thousand dollars a year among twenty thousand people is certainly not burdensome. The most opposition of this nature will be met in places having a large foreign population, or from rich people who don't want their taxes increased, don't want books, and don't want others to have them.

Another argument urged against the public library is the amount of fiction in the library and the number of novels that will be read. This argument has sometimes been used in a most unjustifiable manner. The proportion of fiction, adult and juvenile, in a library varies from fifteen to twenty-five per cent., — it is generally about twenty per cent., — but the percentage of the reading of fiction is from sixty to eighty per cent., the average being seventy-five per cent. These figures have been used and abused to imply that seventy-five per cent. of the volumes in a library are fiction. Good, clean, healthy fiction never hurts any one, and is much to be preferred to no reading at all. Libraries now aim to keep none but the best, and by personal effort manage to diminish not a little the proportion of fiction read.

Perhaps the weakest argument, nevertheless one often brought forward, is that the library will form a convenient meeting place for people, meaning women who go shopping, and others who do not come to read. This hardly needs an answer. Only a few of the advantages of a public library are noted in this paper, as these have been treated more fully in the first number of this series. Some of the arguments against a public library have been given, however, and the attempt made to show where some of the opposition will come from, as this is varied and many times

unlooked for. Some people oppose every new thing on general principles.

Having treated the case where there is a public library law, let us now pass to the case where there is no public library law on the statute books.

Here two lines of action are possible; first, to get an act passed, and second, to work for a free public library without a special act.

It is advisable generally to begin a public library under existing laws, either subscription library laws, or general corporation laws, or association laws. These are found in every State. Even a subscription library may be run as a public library, and, in fact, many are so conducted so far as reading-room and reference use are concerned. Still another and better plan, much to be preferred if possible, is to have a free public library supported by subscriptions and gifts, and free to the public. Such was the beginning of the New York (City) Free Circulating Library.

Some definite action should be taken along one of these various lines; for in any enterprise the best way to start is to start, and not only to talk about it.

In any of these cases there must be an organization, — due care being taken to conform to the law under which action is taken. A constitution and by-laws are needed, providing for the purpose of the association, its name, and its officers. Regarding the latter, provision should be made for their election, with their terms of office, duties, power to receive, hold, and dispose of all property real and personal, the engagement of employees, and responsibility for reports and auditing, debts and dues. Great care must be exercised to keep always in mind the non-mercantile aspect of the work, to spend no money on buildings, lectures, pictures, or museums, but to devote all energies to building up the library and to doing library work in its different ramifications. This is all only a preparatory step toward having a free public library supported by the people, of the people, for the people.

Be as liberal as possible with all the library advantages and so gain friends among the taxpayers, looking toward a time when the institution shall be the people's library. Avoid all rings, cliques, and combinations, as tending to belittle the library and as foreign to its spirit.

Having made this start, attention should be turned to the legislative side of the question. Collect and study library laws, keeping in mind local needs as a State, and also the sentiment of the people. In New England, for example, there is a stanch home feeling, a self-government bias, which differs from the tendency toward paternalism found in some of the newer States.

As a basis the Illinois law may be recommended as better and fairer all around than the New England appropriation laws, or the New York State subsidy law.

Having settled on the main features of the law desired, enlist your own assemblymen and senators in the work, and when the legislature is in session the library workers should send on their best lobbyists and stay with the bill until it becomes a law or is defeated. It may be necessary to "trim" somewhat, in order to get the bill through, but the main purpose of the law should be guarded and there should be as little tampering as possible. The most vulnerable points will be the amount of tax, how levied and collected, and the appointment of boards of directors and their powers. Fortunately in all but a few of our States politics cut little or no figure in the management of the public library. It is not considered a place for the spoilsman, and although there would seem to be some patronage connected with the positions, they are usually not so lucrative as to affect even the librarianship, let alone the assistants. On this account, and also because as a class librarians attend strictly to their business and let politics alone, our libraries are almost *sui generis* in matters of politics.

So much for starting a public library under public library

laws or other laws, and for securing a public library law where none existed before. Now to some general problems occurring in any or all of the subjects treated. Remember, this is genuine missionary work. Some of it will be unappreciated, some of it will be opposed, methods are likely to be criticised and motives maligned. If one is sensitive either to blame, criticism, or neglect, one would better retire and give place to a stronger and safer leader. Until you undertake something of this kind and are brought into contact not only with the classes but the masses, you will not know of how complex a body politic you are a member.

Always keep in mind that the library when it comes must be free to *all*, and that sooner or later it must pass out of the hands of those who have in the first instance made it possible and have carefully nurtured it in its infancy, and that eventually it must be carried on by other brains and other hands. Therefore the policy chosen should be broad and generous and noble, The masses as well as the classes are to use the library, and the former outnumber and outvote the latter. In saying this, there is no thought of advising any lowering of tone, any pandering to bad taste. But the policy adopted should be neither aristocratic nor exclusive. Great care should be taken in the selection of the members of the board: no sects, no creeds, no fads should be allowed undue influence.

It will be a surprise some time to note the growth of the worker's own ideas through this work. This can, perhaps, be best explained by an illustration. In one library the book committee of the trustees objected to the purchase of some free-trade books for the library. They were all protectionists, had no use for such works, and regarded the library as their private collection. They were told by the librarian that this was a *public* library, and both sides of a controversy must be *fully* represented. This was an entirely new thought to them. The library is no place for propaganda, no place for narrow and one-sided work. This

breadth of view should be shown in the organization of committees, and great pains should be taken to harmonize all the various conflicting elements which will have to be enrolled in order to enlist all the different interests of the place. As a rule more care must be taken in the first stages of development than is necessary even in the formation of the first board of directors or trustees, for this reason: that after a thing is started it gains momentum as it goes along and stands a certain amount of adversity and bad management without disastrous results, whereas in its inchoate state, as an idea, care must be taken to keep the germ alive until its appearance in concrete form. So all discretion, forbearance, and tact should be exercised by the promoters if they wish to succeed with the public. In the selection of members of the library board, besides allying all factions and representing all the various interests, it is an essential that live men and women should be chosen. What are needed are some intelligent, keen, business men, some women to look after their part of the work, and one or two well-rounded literary men. Let there be also a fair representation of the young and progressive members of the community, and be chary of selecting so-called "scholars," who too often are men of one subject.

The librarian should be chosen soon after the organization of the trustees. In the growth of the library movement, he has become better equipped than in the earlier days, and it is altogether the safest and best plan to let him do most of the book selection. Time was when the directors of the small library did all the book buying, the librarian not being accounted able to suggest reading for the public. But the librarian nowadays is generally equipped for all parts of his work, is in constant touch with the public, and it is his business to know what people are reading, what they want, and what books are coming out. He alone can keep the library well-rounded. Let me give an instance from my own observation: A library of twenty years'

growth of about twenty thousand volumes had been built up, largely by one man's selection. He had spent much time and thought on the buying of books, and when the opportunity came to reorganize it and classify it, I was more and more impressed with the excellent character of the library. I count it the best library of its size that I know. And yet that library had not a single book on these subjects: trained nursing, cooking, dressmaking, bicycle repairing, stenography, oil and gas engines, or boat building. It needed a librarian's eye to see just these defects and to remedy them. So there is less need than formerly of having a board of "literary" people. The library of today is a vital institution, quick to respond to the varied needs of its constituency, and the governing body should be alert, far-seeing, looking not to the past with its traditions, not alone to the present with its needs, but far into the future to its possibilities.

Care should be taken in choosing the model on which the library is to be developed. Do not go to the largest public library for advice and blanks and forms, for few libraries of even one hundred thousand volumes are fit models for a small library. Go to some place of nearly equal size which possesses a new library building, new collections of books, and the new library atmosphere. Having studied that thoroughly, go to another one, always carefully remembering local conditions and local needs, the limitation of the building by its surroundings or the wishes of the giver, always noting the fact that no two collections of books designed for different communities should be exactly alike.

Be not building-crazy. Let the library grow and develop first and see what you need. Do not for a moment think of putting all the money into a building and none into books or maintenance, thus at the outset defeating the purpose of the library.

Regarding rules and regulations: have as few as possible and make those as inconspicuous as possible. There is

no reason why the library should rival the county jail in this respect. Here again there should be special care regarding the models chosen. I know one library whose directors went to a library of two hundred and fifty thousand volumes in a large city, and adopted the guarantor's blank there in use, — as long, legal, and involved as a chattel mortgage. All the matter necessary can be put on the back of a business card, and in some libraries even this is being done away with, and a simple reference required instead. Remember that library attendance is not compulsory; people should be encouraged and invited to come to the library, not driven away by rules, regulations, and red tape.

It may be well here to note a few of the lines of modern library work, even though this may entail a certain amount of repetition. These lines include circulating, reference, school, and club work, and work for children. These may all be carried on in one small room, but as they develop there should be at least three separate rooms or places overlooked from a central point. We are coming more and more to the adoption of free access to shelves. By this is meant letting people select their own books at the shelves, taking them to the desk to be charged. All of these details, as well as those of location, accessibility, quiet, light, air, building, rooms, book selection, book buying, cataloguing, classification, charging systems, shelving, lighting, heating and ventilation, selection of assistants, care and repairs of building, rules and regulations, will be more fully considered under the topic Organization of a Library, which properly comes after this work of starting a library. For that reason none of these have been considered in detail.

But above all and beyond all should the workers in this cause absorb the library spirit, the missionary spirit. They should attend library meetings of their own State, by all means; they should attend the meetings of the American

Library Association if these are held reasonably near, and they should visit as many libraries as they can. When on the latter errand, they should not go to see the books, the building, or the catalogue alone; but to see how the library is conducted, to meet the librarian, and see the librarian meet the people. They should study the work in all its many branches and see how these are all inter-related, how they all work together for the upbuilding of a community. There will be surprises in many directions. Much work can be done on small capital by a tactful, bright, enthusiastic worker, and such workers are most often women. The high position which the small public library of to-day holds in the minds of the people is due largely to the woman's work put into the library. No amount of money, no fine building, no large collection of books can make up for the deficiency of a living, working brain and heart. So in all studying and planning this should be always borne in mind. The mission of the public library is largely to that ninety per cent of the people whose formal education ends with the grammar school, and the great question now in the minds of all librarians is how to reach and help these people. This is the present mission of the public library in the United States, especially in small places and in manufacturing centres. As a rule, the public library does not make a special effort to help the learned, for in many cities there are public, endowed reference libraries for this special purpose, but it does bend every energy toward helping those who need help most.

Bear this always in mind in preparatory work, and again and more particularly when the work of actual organization begins. It is emphatically the greatest good for the greatest number that is desired, and no building should be too fine, no collection of books too costly, to be above or beyond this aim, nor should any set of rules, red tape, or rigid regulations interfere with this development. The library should be for the people, and they should be first

considered in its work. It is required, therefore, to be diligent in doing, liberal in policy, far-seeing in plans both for present and future, that in no way should the benefit of the work be lost to any one, nor the true purpose of the library be defeated.

American Library Association

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LIBRARY TRACT, No. 3

TRAVELING LIBRARIES

BY

FRANK A. HUTCHINS

Secretary Wisconsin Free Library Commission

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Jan. 5, 1901.

B.

TRAVELING LIBRARIES*

BY F. A. HUTCHINS,

Secretary Wisconsin Free Library Commission, Madison, Wis.

For some years careful students of the library movement in the United States have felt confident that every resident of a city would soon have good library privileges without fee. The rivalry of cities, the growing belief in the necessity of free libraries in our general system of education, and the feeling that public libraries are the most enduring monuments are uniting to secure for such libraries great private and public gifts. Until seven years ago, however, there was no systematic and continued effort to give free access to collections of good books to farmers and the residents of small villages. The almost universal lack of library privileges in rural communities has not arisen so much from failure to appreciate books as from certain practical difficulties in the methods of supplying them. The writer has visited scores of small communities, in a state which may fairly be regarded as typical, and has found very few in which public libraries have not at some time been started. Less than two per cent., possibly not one per cent., of those established before 1893 have been permanently successful. While nearly all of them did some good during the first year or two of their existence, the waste of money, effort, and enthusiasm involved in their failures is appalling.

The reasons for their failures are uniform and easily understood. They resulted from the following causes: —

1. Uninteresting books. The books of the first purchase were usually books of good reputation which the average

[1] Prepared in October, 1899.

reader did not care for. The historical works generally included the volumes of Gibbon, Macaulay, Hume, and Bancroft, and others as formidable.

2. Infrequent supplies of new books. In most cases all the money raised from fees, subscriptions, or entertainments was used in the first purchase of books, and when each patron had read the few volumes that interested him he went no more to the library.

Wherever suitable volumes were bought and new books were frequently supplied, the libraries flourished as vigorously in the country as in the city. It was evident then that if some plan could be devised to give country people books selected by educated buyers, and to give them fresh books at frequent intervals, the problem of giving farmers successful libraries would be solved, but no practical solution was suggested until 1892. In that year Mr. Melvil Dewey, librarian of the State Library in New York, secured from the legislature of that State an appropriation to inaugurate a new system of library extension, which was so simple, practical, and economical that it was immediately successful, and has since been followed in two thirds of the States of the Union. With the money appropriated Mr. Dewey bought a number of small libraries of one hundred volumes each. Stations for them were made in villages, in schools, and in connection with university extension centres and study clubs. A library was sent to a station to remain six months, and at the end of that period it was returned to Albany, to be sent out to another station. These itinerant collections of books soon became known as "traveling libraries."

To secure the preservation and safe return of the books Mr. Dewey demanded certain pledges. In communities having no public library or accredited school he required a guaranty signed by twenty-five tax-payers. Each library was sent out in a chest. With it went a library case, a charging outfit and a number of small, printed, annotated

catalogs. The library was managed, as far as practicable, like a good small public library. The main purpose was to show people how greatly a library may benefit a community, and to create a desire for a local library. From the larger communities Mr. Dewey asked pledges that efforts would soon be made to establish permanent libraries.

The work in New York has been steadily growing, and in 1898 the State Library in Albany sent out 534 traveling libraries. There are now libraries for special students and study classes in many branches of literature, science, and art, as well as for the general reader. Lantern slides and pictures are sent under conditions similar to those made for books. A uniform fee of five dollars is charged for the use of a library of one hundred volumes. Smaller fees are charged for smaller libraries. Despite the fee the local managers must make the library free and accessible to all residents of the community.

In 1895 the legislatures of Michigan and Iowa made appropriations for traveling libraries to be purchased and managed by the librarians of the state libraries. In Michigan an annual appropriation of $2500 was made. In Iowa the annual appropriation is $2000.

In the former State the system was successful from the start. In Iowa it has been equally successful since Mr. Johnson Brigham became state librarian in 1898. Mr. Brigham's experience, however, has convinced him that the traveling libraries would be more successful in securing the establishment of permanent local libraries and in cultivating the "library spirit" in all parts of the State if they were under the charge of a state library commission, of which the state librarian should be a member.

In 1896 the State Library of Ohio was placed under the charge of a State Library Commission, which was given authority to use such volumes as could be spared to make traveling libraries. These smaller libraries are made up to suit the needs of the special organizations sending for them,

and when returned the books are merged in the general library. While this plan has some advantages, it practically prevents the publication of small, printed, annotated catalogs such as are furnished with the traveling libraries in other States. In New York as many as ten libraries are sometimes made up similar in all respects, and this makes the cost of selecting, classifying, annotating, and printing for each one a comparatively small expense.

The experiment in Ohio was so successful that the legislature has recently voted an annual appropriation of $4000 for traveling libraries.

In 1899 the legislature of Minnesota established a State Library Commission and gave it $5000 annually for two years to pay for books for traveling libraries and to provide for their purchase, arrangement, and circulation. "The formation of permanent libraries and the better organization of those now in existence will be the chief aim of the commission in all its plans."

In the same year a library commission was established in Maine, and the legislature appropriated $2500 for its use in buying traveling libraries. Fifteen hundred dollars of this amount is available now and the remainder will be given in 1900.

While the legislatures of many States have been besieged for appropriations for the new system of popular education, only those mentioned have given money directly for books. The failure to get aid in other States has not stayed the rapid progress of the movement. It has probably helped it. In 1896 Hon. J. H. Stout of Menomonie, Wis., concluded to found a system of traveling libraries in his home county. He secured the assistance of the Wisconsin Free Library Commission, which had recently been established, in the labor of organizing the libraries and putting them at work. He soon had thirty-seven small libraries stationed in different parts of a county whose total population, outside of his home city, was 16,000. His experiment was so

strikingly successful that it inspired imitation, first in his own State and then in other States. Where individuals were unable to take up this work, associations were formed to do for limited areas what state aid had done for commonwealths. Schools, women's clubs, and various philanthropic organizations found the means to provide libraries for special purposes. In May, 1899, there were about 2500 traveling libraries, containing about 115,000 volumes, scattered in thirty States. About 1100 of these were equipped and maintained by state aid. Two hundred and fifteen of the remainder, those in Wisconsin, were bought with money given by individuals or associations, but were generally purchased, arranged, and supervised by a State Library Commission. The remainder were purchased and managed by private individuals or asssociations.

The ease with which the new plan of library extension may be adapted to meet various needs may be shown in a rapid summary of the work done by a few systems of traveling libraries. Some women in New Jersey have used them to lighten the long winter days and evenings of the brave men who belong to the life-saving service, and that State has now taken up the traveling library as a definite part of the work of its State Library; other women, in Salt Lake City, send them regularly to remote valleys in Utah; a number of state federations of women's clubs use them to furnish books for study to isolated clubs; Mrs. Eugene B. Heard of Middleton, Ga., is devoting herself to the supervision of an admirable system which reaches a large number of small villages on the Seaboard Air Line in five Southern States; an association in Washington, D. C., puts libraries on the canal-boats which ply on the Washington and Potomac Canal in the summer and "tie up" in small hamlets in the Blue Ridge Mountains in the winter; the colored graduates of Hampton Institute carry libraries to the schools for their own people at the base of the Cumberland Mountains, while to the "mountain whites" libra-

ries are sent by women's clubs in Kentucky, Tennessee, and Alabama. In Idaho, California, Nebraska, Kansas, Illinois, Missouri, Minnesota, and many other States, women's clubs are doing the same work for miners, lumbermen, farmers, and sailors. The people of British Columbia and New Zealand are successfully imitating their American cousins in this work. In Massachusetts, where nearly every community has its public library, the Woman's Educational Association is doing a most helpful work by using traveling libraries to strengthen the weak public libraries in the hill towns.

The blessings resulting from the use of the traveling libraries have been so great and the expense so small comparatively that the movement has won friends and sympathy in a wonderful manner. Enthusiasm for the work has seemed to kindle at a touch, and the pioneers have often been overwhelmed with calls for advice and information.

There is no need now to tell in detail of the instances where individual, family, and community life has been brightened and quickened by the wholesome and entertaining books that have found their way to sordid homes and isolated hamlets. Even in great cities like Philadelphia the new system has forced good books through new channels into places where they had been rarely used.

It needs no argument to prove that no small collection of books for temporary service can be as helpful to a community as a permanent public library, and that a traveling library which educates a people to desire and support a good permanent library has fulfilled its highest purpose. It is also evident that some isolated communities cannot or will not support adequate home libraries, and must depend upon traveling libraries almost entirely for their reading. There will also be a permanent need for traveling libraries in supplementing the scant collections of the smaller libraries and in supplying the temporary needs of isolated study clubs. A special library on American history with a suggestive

outline may incite careful study in a score of villages before its brief life is ended, when the meagre local opportunities would discourage students.

As to the first and most important result to be secured through traveling libraries, experience seems to prove that those managed by state commissions lead more surely and quickly to the establishment of public libraries than those managed by associations. In New York a large number of public libraries have sprung up in communities which were first supplied by traveling libraries. In Wisconsin the smaller libraries have brought about the founding of twenty local libraries in small villages during the past two years.

State commissions have succeeded better than private associations in establishing permanent libraries because they work largely to that end and can offer more effective assistance in organizing new libraries. They put their traveling libraries more generally in the villages, while the sympathy of the women's clubs is more often aroused by the needs of the women and children on the farms. The commissions have at their command the library experience of the world, their books are better adapted to their purposes, their loan systems are more practical and business-like, they do more to communicate the "library spirit" to the librarians and managers of the little libraries, and they can better care for the books when returned to the central station. In a word, they make the management of traveling libraries a business. The systems of traveling libraries supported by associations have done work of this kind when the details of their management have been intrusted to librarians.

A description of a method used in Wisconsin to secure the founding of public libraries may be of interest here. It is not described because it is more successful than methods used elsewhere, but because the facts are better known to the writer. In January, 1898, only three villages in Wisconsin of less than 1500 inhabitants had free libraries sup-

ported by public tax. Early in that year the state commission secured from generous citizens the money to buy twenty traveling libraries for villages. These were made up largely of comparatively recent books. The commission then proposed to the village boards in as many villages to send them traveling libraries of fifty volumes each every six months if they would establish local public libraries under the state law, make suitable annual appropriations, and conduct them in a satisfactory manner. The commission also offered to aid in the organization of the local libraries. Since the offer was made twenty village libraries have been founded because of it. In nearly every case the commission has practically selected the books and decided the rules under which the library shall be conducted. All are succeeding and many of them are doing such good work as to surprise their most sanguine friends. In one case the establishment of the library brought private gifts of $7700, and in another case, in a village of less than 500 inhabitants, the appropriation and gifts for the first year amounted to $1050.

While associations have not been as successful as organizations supported by the State in securing the establishment of permanent libraries, they have been very successful in other important fields where those who give and those who receive can meet. It is clear that our city and village libraries should be free to neighboring farmers, but the farmers do not generally appreciate the value of the libraries, and are unwilling to bear a fair share of the burden of supporting them. There is no better way of educating them than to supply them from traveling libraries furnished by private associations working from a central library. Associations, like women's clubs and organizations of normal school students, have done so much good with traveling libraries, when they have managed them wisely, that it seems best to state the conditions necessary to succeed, frankly, and in some detail.

Traveling libraries must have books that will interest the people whom they are intended to benefit; they must be put in the right places, in charge of the right people, and they must be carefully supervised. The most needy places must have carefully chosen books. An habitual reader will read any respectable book rather than be idle, but the range of books that will hold untrained readers is very limited. Libraries made up of gifts from private libraries have rarely been permanently successful. The people who have tried to lay up treasures in heaven by contributing old books to traveling libraries have often injured a most worthy cause.

Libraries in country communities should be in homes or public places where people feel free to go. If the books are to help the families that need them most, they must be in charge of people who seek every opportunity to reach such families. It frequently happens that librarians who mean well weary in well doing. They need the encouragement of occasional visits from enthusiastic leaders. If personal visits are not practicable, they should receive frequent letters. Above all they need the stimulus of a hearty appreciation of their work, for their work is often trying. All this means that some one shall give the time for careful supervision. When a library has done its work at Station A, it should be examined and, if necessary, the books should be cleaned and mended before it is sent to Station B. If the books have been well cared for, the librarian and the patrons should be thanked. If they have been carelessly used, a very carefully worded statement of the fact should go with the next library.

The charging system should be as simple as possible. The librarians are unpaid, and all labor that can be saved them should be done at the central station.

In selecting, classifying, and preparing the books, in examining and mending them, the work will ordinarily be better done if it is under the charge of a trained librarian,

and it will be done more economically if it is done in a good public library.

An association working from a central library and covering a county can have occasional meetings in the field and at the central station, which will inspire the isolated workers, cultivate the "library spirit," and ultimately lead people to study as well as read.

Many isolated communities find much pleasure in the boxes of periodicals which are frequently sent with the books. A tired housewife enjoys an illustrated paper or magazine more than a book, and a poor boy often gets his first idea that reading may be a pleasure from a copy of the "Youth's Companion."

In packing the books to send to small stations, a number of plans have been tried. In New York the books are packed in a stout chest and shipped with a suitable bookcase, which accompanies the books on all their travels. Mr. Stout sends his out in strongly made cases which serve as packing-boxes and also as library-cases when they reach their destinations. In other places the books are sent in strong packing-cases, and the communities receiving them provide their own shelving. The latter plan is the most economical, and is growing in favor where economy must be practiced. When the packing-cases are used, the covers are fastened with screws, because when locks were used the keys were so frequently lost.

The number of books in the different traveling libraries varies, but usually there are from thirty-five to fifty in those containing books for general readers, and from fifteen to thirty in those for study clubs.

In the matter of fees the States which buy the books generally follow the New York plan and charge three dollars for each visit of a library of fifty volumes, and the State pays the transportation charges. Associations generally charge no fees, and make the recipients pay all transportation charges. Theoretically it is not right to give

people "something for nothing," but practically it is certain that there are communities, where libraries are woefully needed, which will not pay a cent for them; and if one is not hampered by state laws and inflexible rules, such communities can be helped even if a good theory does suffer.

If traveling libraries are advertised to be sent for a fee, even a moderate one, they will be drawn to the most intelligent communities where people are most willing to pay for library privileges and where they first hear of new opportunities. If, however, agents for traveling libraries can be sent out, they can find the most needy communities and the persons best fitted to be librarians. Such communities need personal, hand-to-hand work in the cause of education, and associations of individuals working near their own homes can do a work that cannot be done at present by state systems.

There seems, therefore, to be a great field for state systems of traveling libraries in securing the establishment of free public libraries, in strengthening such libraries in poor communities, and in developing the "library spirit" in all parts of a State. There seem to be other important fields for associations in sending out libraries: (1) to show their usefulness and create a demand for state systems; (2) to educate farmers to help support their neighboring city and village libraries; (3) to supply isolated communities beyond the reach of public libraries.

Strong state associations can also help isolated study clubs by sending out libraries on special subjects. As such libraries go to clubs of intelligent people, they do not need careful supervision to secure good results.

Persons who desire to establish systems of traveling libraries, and who wish further information and suggestions in regard to such practical details as the selection of the books, guaranties for the safe keeping of the libraries, fees for borrowers, charging systems, library-cases and catalogs, can

best obtain them by writing to the managers of successful systems. It would be unwise to recommend a list of books in this tract, because different communities vary in their needs. The families about a sawmill in northern Wisconsin demand stories, while a community of "mountain whites" holds novels in contempt.

For printed information as to state systems, address the following: —

New York State Library, Albany, Melvil Dewey, librarian.

Ohio State Library Commission, Columbus, C. B. Galbreath, secretary.

Michigan State Library, Lansing, Mrs. M. C. Spencer, librarian.

Maine State Library Commission, Augusta, State Librarian, secretary.

Minnesota State Library Commission, Miss Gratia Countryman, Public Library, Minneapolis, secretary.

Kansas State Library Commission, Topeka, James L. King, secretary.

Iowa State Library, Des Moines, Johnson Brigham, librarian.

Wisconsin Free Library Commission, Madison, F. A. Hutchins, secretary.

For information regarding successful systems managed by individuals or associations, apply to: —

Miss Alice G. Chandler, Lancaster, Mass.

Mrs. E. B. Heard, Middleton, Ga.

Miss Stella Lucas, Menomonie, Wis.

Mrs. C. P. Barnes, Louisville, Ky.

A most successful system for cities is under the charge of John Thomson of the Free Library, Philadelphia, Pa.

American Library Association
PUBLISHING BOARD
LIBRARY TRACT, No. 4

LIBRARY ROOMS AND BUILDINGS

By CHARLES C. SOULE
TRUSTEE OF A. L. A. ENDOWMENT FUND

PUBLISHED FOR THE
American Library Association
BY
HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN & COMPANY, BOSTON
1902

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The A. L. A. Publishing Board may issue (if there appears to be a demand for it) a supplement to this Tract, containing reprints of articles on various matters preliminary to building, together with a bibliography of books and articles on Library Buildings and a few plans of libraries of different sizes which conform to the suggestions herein made.

Dec. 5, 1907.
y.

LIBRARY ROOMS AND BUILDINGS.

ONE ROOM.

In starting a small library, a separate building is not necessary. A single room will often answer all purposes at first, especially for a neighborhood library whose users all know each other, and where books are mainly taken out for home use, and are not read on the premises.

If there is any choice as to location, a cheerful and attractive room should be selected, near the business centre of the district to be served.

Very little furniture is required for a start. Any kind of desk for records, one or two plain tables for magazines and newspapers, a few common chairs, lamps for evening use, and such simple shelving as any carpenter can construct, are all that will be needed. To plan the shelving, reckon the number of volumes the library will have at first and will be likely to add during the first year or two, and allow 8 volumes to the foot (see p. 16). Thus, if the library has 500 volumes, and hopes to get 300 more within a year, $800 \div 8 = 100$ linear feet of shelving will be sufficient for its present needs.

It is best to put shelves against walls opposite or at right angles to windows, and not between them, so that there will be either direct or side light on the backs of the books. A room 15×20 feet, with windows on one side, will give three sides, less space occupied by doors and fireplace, for shelving. If the windows are on the long side, and there are two doors 4 feet wide, and a fireplace 6 feet wide, there

will be two sides of 15 feet and one of 20 feet (=50 feet) less ($2 \times 4 + 6 = 14$ feet), or 36 feet, less two corners counted twice, — say 34 feet clear wall-space available.

A book-case seven shelves high, against the wall at one end of the room ($7 \times 15 = 105$ feet) would give the requisite shelf-room. Another method which might be used, would be to run three shelves breast-high around the room ($3 \times 34 = 102$ feet), thus bringing all the books about opposite the eyes of readers examining them.

In putting up shelving against the end of the room, use inch boards 8 inches wide, leave a base of 4 inches to raise the lower shelf above the sweepings of the floor, then a space of (say) 13 inches for large volumes, with six shelves above at further intervals of 10 inches (or 11 inches from top to top of shelves), and a top-board with or without moulding.[1] Or, the lower shelf and the three shelves next above, at top-to-top intervals of (say) 13, 12, and 11 inches can be made 16 inches deep, with shelves above 8 inches deep at 11 inch intervals, thus leaving a useful ledge 8 inches wide 40 inches from the floor.

If the breast-high shelving is preferred, put the top shelf about 5 feet from the floor, with two others below with top-to-top intervals of 11 inches, — all 8 inches wide. Provide wider shelving elsewhere for large reference books.

In either instance, support the shelves by uprights at equal intervals of not more than 3 or less than $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet. Leave the wood as it is, or, better, shellac it. Do not use paint, as it is apt to rub off.

Shelving can be added, in the first method, in sections around the other sides; and in the second method, above and below the three shelves first built. No shelf should ever be so high that a person of average height cannot reach the books on it, or read their titles. When the three

[1] This top-board is not generally used as a shelf. The "top-shelf" spoken of elsewhere is the shelf below the top-board, — the top shelf used for holding books.

available sides of the room are filled with shelves, there will be 34 feet of wall shelving 7 shelves high = 238 linear feet, each foot with a "practical capacity" of 8 volumes, giving shelf-room for about 1900 volumes.

Fixed shelving is usual in small libraries, as it is easier to construct, cheaper, and less liable to get out of order. For suggestions as to movable shelving, see p. 18.

TWO OR MORE ROOMS.

As a library grows, especially if it is to be used not only for issue of books to be read at home, but also for study or light reading on the premises, it becomes desirable to separate its functions and assign them to different rooms.

In planning quarters for any library, economy of service is an essential requirement. Only one attendant can usually be employed in small libraries to catalog and prepare books for use, to receive, issue, and record books in circulation, to answer questions, and to keep an eye on strangers and restless children. Rooms should therefore be planned for service and supervision by one person from some central point.

Of two rooms, one can be used for the return, examination, issue, and record of books in circulation, and the reading of newspapers, — which entail bustle and noise; the other for consultation of reference books, and reading of periodicals, for which silence is desirable.

Three rooms will allow further division, one for the circulating department (book-room), one for reference and quiet reading, one for periodicals or for children.

When two or three rooms are used, they should if possible be opened together by broad doorways or glass partitions, so that a single attendant, seated near the junction of two rooms, or in the central room of three, may have complete oversight of the farthest corners, and be within reach of readers who want to ask questions. Three rooms are as many as one attendant can watch and serve effectively.

The shelving of the book-room may follow the plan suggested for a one-room library. If the walls are so cut up by doors and windows as to leave little clear wall-space, alcoves may be formed by building out double book-cases between or opposite the windows. Still more books can be stored in the book-room, by filling it with what are called "floor-cases," double book-cases, open on both sides, and set across the floor, with aisles between generally not less than 3 feet wide. These cases are usually 16 inches deep, and 7 or 7½ feet high; built in sections 10 or 12 feet long; sometimes with narrow ledges waist-high (with correspondingly deeper shelves underneath), but oftener straight up and down, with or without a moulding at the top. Each running foot of these double cases, 7 shelves high, will give 14 linear feet of shelving and will hold (at 8 volumes to the foot) about 110 volumes, and each section 12 feet long has a capacity of about 1300 volumes. The cases should always be set at right angles to the windows, to allow a maximum of light through the aisles. (See further suggestions on pp. 16–18.)

In a reference room, the larger volumes are often shelved in low wall-cases; base 4 inches, a shelf, say 17 inches above, and 15 inches above this a ledge, all 15 inches deep. This ledge, 3 feet from the floor, serves as a rest for books in temporary use. Such shelving will hold all encyclopædias and dictionaries. Atlases will have to be kept on tables, or on shelves specially built for them.

The furniture of these rooms — a desk and chairs or settees for the book-room, tables and chairs for the other rooms — should be simple and strong; not so solid as to be costly or cumbrous, nor so light as to tip over easily. Arm-chairs occupy more space than ordinary chairs. Rubber tips on chair-legs prevent noise on bare floors.

To calculate how many persons a reading-room will hold, allow 16 square feet in a magazine-room, 20 square feet in a reference room, as a minimum; — more in the latter

because table room for several books at a time is often required by a reader. This estimate allows for tables 3 feet wide, with 2½ feet on the sides of the tables and 4 square feet of floor room for each reader, and with narrow passages between tables.

As to floors, carpets and rugs are objectionable, because they collect and hold dirt. Bare floors, either without treatment, or painted or shellacked, are preferable on account both of expense and of cleanliness. They are noisy, however, and to insure quiet, a covering of cork-carpet is recommended as noiseless, easily kept clean, and durable. As a cheap alternative, rubber strips 3 feet wide may be laid along aisles and passage-ways.

ADAPTING A BUILDING.

When a library outgrows three rooms, it ought to have a building all its own.

One possibility is to rent, or accept from some donor, an existing building erected for some other purpose, — usually a dwelling-house. It is generally unwise to buy such a building for a library, because its cost, together with the cost of necessary alterations, might serve to erect a building better adapted to library purposes.

When the building is rented or given, the problem arises, how to fit it up for the uses of the library. It is best to study its capabilities carefully, in the light of the requirements suggested later on under the head of "New Buildings," and to make as few changes as possible.

The rooms on the ground floor should be opened into each other or thrown together (the stairs if necessary being moved to the back of the house, or provided for by an addition to the building), to form the necessary service rooms, — book-room, reference-room, magazine room, a children's room and librarian's or cataloging-room. As the cellar will usually be dark or unfinished, and fitted only for heating plant and fuel storage, the other desirable rooms, — trus-

tees and special students, storage, duplicates, public documents, and such other departments as the growth of the library may develop, must be assigned to the chamber floor. Generally speaking, in a library of moderate size, not supplied with an elevator, nothing but duplicate and storage rooms ought to be put in a third story.

As the weight of books, especially in book-rooms filled with floor-cases, is greater than the load provided for in building a dwelling-house, the floors (and sometimes the walls) may have to be strengthened by extra supports. This should of course be done under the advice of an experienced architect or builder.

It will often be found that the ground floor of a dwelling-house is not large enough to accommodate all the rooms which ought to be located on that floor in a library. In this case, the simplest, the least expensive, and the most effective enlargement may be made by throwing out (preferably on the north side, away from too much direct sunlight) a skeleton book-room, built mainly of wood (or iron) frame-work and glass windows, without cellar, like a conservatory. If fitted up with floor-cases such an addition, 15 × 25 feet, would contain about 9000 volumes.

NEW BUILDINGS.

Although rooms and buildings designed for other purposes may answer in the beginning, — or in small towns even permanently, — the time will come for every growing library, and in these days of public bounty and private beneficence it often comes at the outset, when it is necessary to consider the erection of a building especially adapted for library purposes.

Not necessarily costly.[1] A small library building need not cost much money. A rough, unpainted, cellar-

[1] The figures suggested under this head, though based on the cost of existing buildings, must be taken only as rough estimates, subject to modification with varying conditions, and in different localities.

less, one-room wooden building can be put together for, say $250, and can be fitted up and made comfortable in all weathers for as much more.

From $1000 to $2500 will pay for a tasteful wooden building amply sufficient for a library of not over 5000 volumes; $2500 to $5000 will erect a similar building to hold 10,000 volumes, or even more.

From $10,000 up will provide for a brick building; and from $15,000 up, for a stone building, for growing libraries of 15,000 volumes or over, with the varied functions that such a collection of books implies.

Economy. An essential canon in planning a library is economy. Unless a liberal benefactor wishes to put large outlay upon a memorial building, and is willing also to provide an ample income for its support, the larger and costlier a building is, the greater will be the expense of maintenance and repairs, and the less will be the amount, out of a fixed income, for new books and for administration. A plain building, well stocked with books and with income enough for good service and plentiful additions of current literature, is far more satisfactory to its users than a triumph of art with insufficient service and no new books. A library in an active community will never have income enough for the work progressive administration requires, and therefore especial prudence and foresight are required in making plans which will influence its expenditures.

Present Needs. Another canon in planning is not to build too much beyond the present requirements of a library, but to provide carefully, in advance, possibilities of easy and inexpensive expansion for each department. It is never easy to foresee when, in what department, and to what extent, the need for enlargement will come, or what the methods of management and the consequent requirements will be at any future time.

Site. As has already been suggested, a site should be selected as near as possible to the established business centre,

which users of the library frequently visit. Two considerations, economy and freedom from noise, generally point to a side or back street near the business centre, rather than to the busiest part of the main thoroughfare.

A roomy lot is desirable, for light, air, quiet, and future growth. A corner lot is good, one bordering on three streets better, a whole square best. The building should be so located on the lot as to get the least possible dust and noise, the best light, air, and architectural effect, and the best chance for future enlargement of its service departments.

Isolation. Efficiency of administration will be best insured by devoting the whole building to library use. If it seems necessary or desirable to combine with the library a museum, a music hall, a large auditorium, or quarters for any society, the best plan will be to provide for these functions on a separate floor, or in separate wings, so as to isolate the library and not to complicate more than is absolutely necessary its problems of light and administration.

Conditions. The site having been selected, the next step is to define the conditions which must govern construction. How much money is available? How many volumes will the library contain at the start, and how much will be the probable annual growth for, say ten years to come? What will be the character of the library? Is it a circulating library only? Or will it be used for study? Will it want to provide for any special kind of readers, children for instance, or women, or scientific students? Will it use the "open shelf" system, and admit readers to the shelves? will it have a book-room closed to the public, and issue books from it over a counter? or will it combine both systems? These, and many other similar questions, should be answered, or at least formulated, before planning is begun.

Consulting Librarian. To formulate and solve these queries, it will be wise to get advice from some librarian

who has had previous experience, not only in managing a library, but also in planning a building. Such an expert adviser will be able to calculate in advance the proper size of all the required rooms, and the collocation which will assure the best service; the position and size of the desks and tables; the kind and distribution of shelving; the style and arrangement of windows best adapted to lighting the rooms; and other technical details of interior arrangement.

If the library is cramped for funds, and all engaged in developing it are giving gratuitous service, any librarian applied to will be willing also to give freely such time as he can spare, for advice and assistance. If, on the other hand, ample funds are available from public or private sources, it will in the end be economical to pay such a librarian an expert's fee, and so secure his time and thought, not only in the preliminary steps, but through every process of planning and construction, clear to the finish.

Library Commissioners, in states where they exist, can properly be called on for advice at any stage of planning or constructing a library.

Architect. The next step is to get an architect, — the best one available, — who is willing to take the conditions formulated by the building committee under advice of their library expert, to construct from them a practical interior, and plan a worthy exterior; to get estimates; and when the estimates are found to be within the limit of available funds, to supervise the work of construction. If a conflict of opinion should arise between the architect and the consulting librarian, it will obviously be wise to follow the architect's advice as to matters of taste, material, methods of construction, heating, ventilation, etc., and the librarian's advice as to interior arrangement of rooms and shelving, and other matters touching administration of the library. [As to architectural competitions, see p. 23.]

General Principles. The American Library Associa-

tion has agreed upon these elementary principles of library construction : —

Every library building should be planned especially for the kind of work to be done, and the community to be served.

The interior arrangement should be planned before the exterior is considered.

Plans should provide for future growth and development.

A library should be carefully planned for economical administration.

Public rooms should be planned for complete supervision by the fewest possible attendants.

No convenience of arrangement should be sacrificed for architectural effect.

There should be no such decoration of reading-rooms or working-rooms as will attract sight-seers to disturb readers and attendants.

There should be good natural light in all parts of the building. Windows should extend to the ceiling, to light the upper portions of every room. In a book-room or stack, windows should be opposite the aisles.

No shelf should be placed so high as to be out of reach of a person of medium height standing on the floor.

Flights of stairs should be straight and not circular.

Communication by telephone or speaking tube should be arranged between the working-rooms.

Materials and Construction. For small buildings, wood, as cheaper, is permissible ; but if possible even a small library should be built of durable material. Brick is next cheapest, a good building-stone the most ornamental and satisfactory.

For floors, hard wood is best, except perhaps in cities where there is much soft-coal smoke. Marble or any other stone is noisy, and cold to the feet. A covering of cork-carpet, over wood, deadens sound.

Nearly all books in the average library can be easily replaced. If a large safe-vault is provided for records and very valuable books and manuscripts, and "slow-burning" methods of construction are used throughout the building, it is now considered unnecessary to make the building absolutely fireproof, or to separate the book-rooms or stacks from the rest of the library.

Basement. A light and airy finished basement adds much to the capacity of a library. The difference in cost between a mere cellar and a basement eight or nine feet high is not great, while the basement adds at least a third to the available floor-space of a two-story building. Besides the heating plant and fuel-bins (which can be placed in the darker parts), the exterior portion of a basement story provides good rooms for janitor's use, packing and unpacking books, toilet-rooms, duplicates, public documents, and the like. In large libraries, it affords excellent accommodations for issues to branches, for newspaper reading, for small lecture-rooms, and for many other activities which modern libraries are developing.

Entrance; Halls; Stairways. No entrance or stairway should be allowed to separate rooms or departments which can be better managed when close together. Unnecessarily large entrances, halls, and stairways increase cost and cramp the working departments. In many cases, — especially where a library or a branch library must be built in the centre of a block with party-walls on both sides, — an entrance at one extremity of the lot will allow more light and better arrangement for the service rooms; and there are even cases where a subway or basement entrance, with stairs in the rear, might economize space and leave the whole front of the principal floors available for windows.

Rotundas and domes (except when they serve to light the interior of large libraries) generally interfere with convenient collocation of rooms.

Rudimentary Plan. No one plan or arrangement can

be properly taken as a model for all libraries, even of the same class. There are usually many plans which will conform equally well to essential requirements. But the embryo of library development may be described as a trefoil grouping of three rooms or spaces, with the book-room at the back, a reference-room in one wing, a reading-room in the other, and a central space for applicants for books, delivery desk and catalogs, with entrance through a vestibule in front. With this theme, with subdivision of each department, proportioned to the size of the library, with provision made for enlarging each department as the library grows, the architect may plan a building which will stand all tests of library science, which can be built within the desired limit of cost, and which will also be an ornament to the town in which it is situated.

Rooms and Floors. The main floor of a library should generally be the ground floor, because it is most accessible.

The delivery-room ought always to be on this floor, near the main entrance, and so situated that the constant movement of applicants for books may not disturb readers in the other rooms. The book-room or stack should be close to the delivery-room.

Other rooms which should be on the same floor in libraries of moderate size are the reference-room, the reading (magazine) room, children's room, and rooms for librarians and catalogers.

Rooms which may be placed on an upper floor are those for trustees, special collections, such as Art, Music, Patents, Local History, etc., class-rooms, lecture-rooms, exhibition-rooms; and in general any rooms not in constant use, or used only by a small number of special students.

In arranging rooms, care should be taken to provide for increasing the accommodations in each department as its use increases. With this in view, it is well to finish both basement and attic, or to so construct them that all their

space can be divided into rooms and utilized in future, as needs may arise. It is easier and cheaper to arrange room for overflow inside the building than to trust to subsequent exterior additions.

There is a general consensus of opinion that library rooms should not be higher in the walls than 10 to 12 feet in small buildings, and 14 or 15 feet in large buildings. Where stack stories are 7½ feet high, a floor-height of 15 feet in the main building brings each floor opposite an alternate story of the stack.

Light. There ought to be good light, both natural and artificial, in every part of every room, even (if possible) in a stack. To insure this requires ample window area, and careful location of the windows. In reading-rooms, if lighted from more than one side so that each wall has direct or side light, book-cases from 5 to 7 feet high are often built around the walls, and the windows are placed above, with their sills 6 or 8 feet from the floor. In stacks, high narrow windows are used, a window opposite each aisle between the book-cases.

As a general rule windows in a library ought to extend to the ceiling, with square tops, as one square-foot of high window-space is worth two of low, for lighting the remote parts of a room. To the same end, ceilings and walls should be finished in colors which reflect rather than absorb light.

For artificial light, electricity is better than gas because the fumes of the latter taint the air and injure the books. Each room in use, and the halls, ought to have constant diffused light from ceiling bulbs or clusters; with smaller lights near the shelves in each section, aisle, or alcove, and (if possible) on each table, to be turned on or off as required. A favorite table-light is a low stand with green shade, wired from below.

Storage of books. A linear foot of shelving will hold about 10 volumes of average size, closely packed. Ten vol-

umes to the foot may therefore be called the full capacity of shelving. But in calculating shelf-room, there are several considerations which render practical capacity somewhat less. In small town libraries, indeed, so many volumes are constantly in circulation, leaving gaps on the shelves, that 10 volumes to a foot may perhaps be a safe calculation. But in larger libraries there are some sections from which books rarely get into circulation; there are others where volumes of more than average size may be expected; and everywhere, under modern systems of classification, spaces must be left at frequent intervals for additions to each subdivision.

For these reasons, it is prudent to calculate about 8 volumes to the foot as the practical capacity of shelves in the circulating department of a library; and still less, say 5 volumes to the foot, for reference books, law books, medical books, and other bulky literature.

Under this rule, every 1000 volumes of books for circulation would require about 125 feet of single shelving, equal to 18 linear feet of wall-shelving or 9 feet of double floor-cases 7 shelves high.

Shelving may be of various kinds; for instance: —

Wall-shelving, which is ordinary shelving against the wall. This is suitable for small libraries, for reference and reading-rooms, and for many departments of a large library.

Floor-cases are double book-cases about 7½ feet high[1] facing both ways and usually open through (with perhaps a longitudinal strip along the centre to keep books from being pushed through), and set across the floor. These are generally used in a book-room.

Alcoves are a combination of wall-shelving with floor-cases at right angles to it. These are suitable for libraries conducted on the "open-shelf" plan and for university or reference libraries open to readers. With

[1] To the top of the moulding or finish.

a small table in each alcove, they afford quiet nooks for study, close to the books used. In deep alcoves, it is well to leave passage-ways between the wall-shelving and the floor-cases, to save steps in passing from one alcove to the next.

A **stack** is a modern device for compact storage of books. It is not needed in small libraries, but has become a necessity where a great number of books must be brought together on limited floor-space. It serves library needs just as the "sky scraper" serves to pack together offices in a business centre. A stack-room is usually a bare and high room, walled with brick, and filled with iron or steel shelving, arranged in floors or "decks," about 7½ feet high; each deck containing floor-cases from 16 to 24 inches deep, with aisles not less than 2½ feet wide, at right angles to walls filled with high narrow windows. There are several patent stacks on the market, which ought to be carefully examined and compared before a choice is made. There are also many variations in construction, arrangement, and shelving which can be better understood from inspection than by description.

A stack or a book-room is generally placed at the rear of the building, with a rear wall so built as to allow future extension in that direction.

The capacity of a book-room or stack may be estimated by allowing 20 volumes to every square foot of floor-space on each stack story. Thus a book-room 30×40 feet, filled with floor-cases, will hold 30×40×20 = 24,000 volumes; and if extended upwards into a stack of three stories, its capacity will be 72,000 volumes "full capacity," or 57,600 volumes "practical capacity."[1]

[1] The usual estimate has been 25 volumes to the square foot of floor-space, but actual count of books in the Harvard stack — an exceptionably compact one — indicates 20 volumes as the "full capacity" of a stack room. This maximum will be modified in each

The material for wall-shelving, alcoves, and floor-cases should be wood; hard wood, as more durable, being generally preferable; though soft wood, as cheaper, will answer for small libraries. The latter has one merit,—rough contact with it does not injure books so much. The front edges of wooden shelves and uprights are usually rounded. Grooves in the edges of the shelves, for the insertion of labels, are convenient.

In stacks of two stories, where it is certain that another story will never be needed, wood is good material. In stacks which have, or may need in future, more than two stories, metallic construction is required.

In small libraries and in portions of large libraries permanently devoted to sets or classes of books whose size is uniform, fixed shelving is allowable. The usual interval is 10 inches between shelves, or 11 inches from top to top. In most libraries, however, it is better to have the shelves detached, movable, as far as possible of the same length, and thus interchangeable. A simple and satisfactory method of constructing adjustable wooden shelving is to set uprights 2½ to 3 feet apart with a top-board and moulding or cornice about 7½ feet high, to hold them together, and bore holes at inch intervals near the front and rear of the whole height of both sides. Shelves made to fit easily between the uprights can then be adjusted at any intervals desired, by inserting bronze "shelf-supports" or ordinary picture screw-eyes into the holes, and turning the heads flat to support the ends of the shelves.

Corners in shelving are often boxed in, to avoid the trouble caused by books being hidden in "dead ends" of shelves.

Shelves for octavos and small volumes are usually 8 inches deep; double cases, 16 inches across. For quartos and folios, deeper shelves are required. These should

library by the width of aisles, spacing of shelves, and other varying conditions.

always be provided in proper proportion, even in small libraries.

In any form of shelving, the top shelf[1] should not be put beyond easy reach of a person of moderate height; say 6 or at the most 6½ feet from the floor.

Delivery-Room. In circulating libraries, a delivery desk and counter must be provided, with good light, close to the book-shelves, alcoves, book-room, or stack. It should be long and wide enough for the return and issue of books at the same time. In front, or near it, sufficient space should be provided for bulletin-boards, catalog cases, and seats for applicants waiting for books. In many libraries space is provided on the delivery desk, or on shelves near it, for new books placed on inspection.

Reading-Rooms. One reading-room will answer all the needs of a small library. As it grows, however, its uses become more complex. The first distinction arises between serious reading, where absolute quiet is desirable, and light reading, — that of magazines and newspapers, — which is usually accompanied by more or less moving about and rustling of leaves. This difference requires separate rooms.

A Reference-Room may be lighted from windows in the upper wall-spaces, with wall-shelving underneath; deep shelves at the bottom for the larger books; a ledge about three feet high; and above, ordinary shelving for smaller volumes. This room may be filled with tables and chairs specially selected or constructed with regard to its dimensions. If these are carefully planned and placed, one reader can be accommodated for every 20 square feet of floor-space, although 24 will leave him more room for his papers and books, and for moving about.

A Reading-Room for magazines and newspapers, if lighted as suggested above, will have wall-space for newspaper racks, and shelves for magazines, and for the "half-

[1] See note on p. 4.

hour" books especially suited to casual reading. There are several methods of managing a reading-room. In most libraries, the newspapers are hung on racks constructed for the purpose, and the magazines are distributed about on the tables. In some libraries, however, the periodicals are kept on shelves, either around the walls, open to all readers, or behind a counter, to be issued by an attendant. The arrangement of the room and its furniture will vary according to the system of management adopted for the library. Not so much floor-space is needed for readers as in a Reference-Room; 16 square feet is enough for each person, 20 square feet will be ample.

In modern public libraries, separate reading-rooms for children are considered essential.

In larger libraries, separate rooms are provided for magazines and for newspapers. The latter may be put in a basement with a separate entrance, as its use is generally entirely distinct from other uses of the library.

In larger libraries, separate reading-rooms are often provided for women, for distinctive collections of books, such as Art, Music, Patents, Education, etc., and for special students.

Work-Rooms. In any library but the very smallest, a room is required for cataloging books and preparing them for use. It should be especially well lighted, and should be close to the book-room, and near or directly over (with book-lift between) the "packing-room," where new books are received and unpacked. If a card catalog is used, the case holding it may properly be set between the delivery-room and the cataloging-room, so that the card-drawers may be conveniently used both by the catalogers and by the public. In large libraries, the catalog-room expands into a large room or suite of rooms, arranged according to the successive processes of preparing books for library use.

The Librarian's Room need not be large (except in large

libraries, where a room and an ante-room are needed), but ought to be so situated as to be easily accessible from the work-rooms and the reading-rooms. These rooms are sometimes opened to the supervision of the librarian by windows or glass partitions. An adjoining safe-vault will give fire-proof storage for records and especially valuable manuscripts or books.

Speaking-tube or desk-telephone communication between the work-rooms saves much time and facilitates prompt service.

When a Trustees' or Committee Room is desired, it can be placed on an upper floor. It affords opportunity, if funds are available, for more decoration than is desirable in other service-rooms. If space is lacking, it can also be used for shelving any especially valuable or sumptuous collection of books which the library owns.

High Shelving and Galleries. The practice of shelving to the ceiling, requiring ladders to reach the upper shelves, is considered obsolete. If for any reason this arrangement seems necessary, it is best to break the height of the shelving by a gallery wide enough for convenient inspection and handling of the books.

Galleries, however, are very rarely used in modern library construction, and the tiers of galleries which were common in large American libraries forty years ago are now condemned as being extremely inconvenient and wasteful of space.

Decoration and Architectural Effect. Where funds are limited, it is wise to spend very little on ornament, and to trust, for the beauty of the building, to the effect a good architect can get from proportion and color. Whenever sufficient money is available, a library is so prominent a feature in the civilization of our age that it is properly a theme for the very best architectural setting. In making a building beautiful, however, care should be taken not to let any ornamental features interfere in any degree

with the essential requirements of library service; — especially not to decorate working-rooms or reading-rooms to such a degree that mere sight-seers will be attracted to them, to the annoyance of readers. The exterior may properly be embellished to any degree, if the windows are grouped and planned as interior lighting requires; and of the interior, the halls and stairways, if located so as not to separate or interfere with the service-rooms, offer opportunity for effective ornament.

Before adopting a costly plan of building, two questions should be settled: *first*, will the available funds cover fully all the requirements of library work and of future growth; and *second*, will the assured income of the library cover, not only administrative charges and the purchase of new books, but also the care and repairs of an elaborate building.

VERY LARGE LIBRARIES.

For these the problems are so difficult and so varied, and require such special study by experts, that little advice can be given in this paper except as to methods of procedure.

If the permanent architect is not selected at the outset, a consulting architect should certainly be called in at once. The librarian of a first-class library will usually be able to formulate the working requirements, but if he distrusts his own experience or ability in this direction, a consulting librarian should also be employed. There are now many librarians in the United States who have had sufficient experience both in managing large libraries and in planning buildings to rank as experts.

The architect and librarian should first study the present requirements and future possibilities of the library, the needs of the constituency to be served, the opportunities which the site affords, and the necessary limitations of cost.

Their next step may wisely be to collect and examine the conditions of competition and the building plans of all large

libraries recently erected in this country. (Foreign plans are not so useful, as they are often based on conditions different from ours.) These plans will suggest many ideas as to what rooms are needed, what their size should be, and how they should be grouped. They will suggest also faults to avoid, as well as features to imitate.

The next step may properly be, personal inspection of large libraries of recent construction, by the consulting architect and librarian, with a committee of trustees.

Mr. Foster, of Providence, in a recent paper, advises testing the practical collocation of rooms on different floors by fitting together, in every conceivable order, paper patterns cut carefully by scale to represent the requisite rooms and hallways.

Having by this careful preliminary study developed the requirements of the problem, the architect chosen is prepared to draft plans for the interior; or the librarian and consulting architect can intelligently formulate plans for a competition.

Architectural Competitions. As to competitions, it may be said that architects generally disapprove of them, and the best architects often refuse to compete. The trouble is, there is great difficulty in deciding among competitive plans, even with expert advice, and there is no certainty that the best plan will win. An attractive exterior is apt to succeed rather than a practical interior, and it frequently happens that the successful plans, when put to the test of actual estimates, are found to cost more than the prescribed limit. The dilemma then arises — shall the architect be required to trim his design down, or shall more money be asked for?

The best course, if the building committee can agree, is to select an architect at the start. But if it finds itself unable to agree upon a choice, or if it wishes to be relieved of the responsibility of decision, a competition may be inevitable. In such case, the wise course is to get a consult-

ing architect to arrange conditions with the aid of the librarian, and to assist the committee in selecting a plan among those offered.

There are three kinds of competitions, one open to all architects; another, open only to local architects; a third, open only to a few architects who are especially invited to compete. In the latter case, it is usual to pay each competitor a fixed amount, sufficient to cover office-work on his plans. In either case, it will be prudent to include in the conditions a proviso that the decision shall not be final until working plans are made, estimates obtained, and the cost of carrying out the chosen design shall be found to come within the limit stated in the conditions of competition.

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NOTES FROM THE ART SECTION OF A LIBRARY

WITH HINTS ON SELECTION AND BUYING

BY
CHARLES AMMI CUTTER

NEW YORK STATE LIBRARY SCHOOL
ALUMNI LECTURES, 1903

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May 22. 1906
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NOTES FROM THE ART SECTION OF A LIBRARY

By CHARLES AMMI CUTTER

General principles. The president of the New York State Library School Association has asked me to talk to you on the selection of books and pictures for a library. The vice director of the school has suggested that I state the principles of selection. The phrases, "principles of selection," "rules for selection," would, however, be entirely out of place. They imply too much that is sure and definite. I can only give you my own experience and some practical hints drawn from it.

The subject has a further difficulty arising from the fact that much must depend on the prepossessions, the judgment, the eye of the selector. The only universal rule for selection that can be given is, "Take all you can get." That holds always. Nothing comes amiss, from the woodcut or process plates clipped out of duplicate magazines, prospectuses, advertisements, to the $15 carbons and the painting whose price is in the thousands. Take all you can beg or borrow, but when it is a question of buying from the funds of a small library, "all you can get" is very little, and the most rigid economy with the wisest discretion is needed.

If we take some books and pictures and reject others it must be because we want to do something that the books accepted will help us in doing and the others would not. What, then, is our purpose in buying art books and pictures? Why do we have an art department? We can best make

a little money go a long way if we know just what we are aiming to do and whom we are working for.

Speaking generally, the objects of a public library are: (1) to recreate, rest, please; (2) to instruct, enlighten, satisfy the desire for knowledge; (3) to improve, elevate, morally and spiritually; (4) to inspire, vitalize, which is an intenser degree of (3). These are the main objects also of the art section, but there is added a special quality arising from the subject matter, art.

1 Besides the pleasure that comes from the story of a picture, as it might from a novel, is the pleasure derived from the artistic excellence of the picture because it is well painted, in drawing, color, composition.

2 Besides the geographic, historical, biographic or ethnologic knowledge that pictures give, there is the knowledge of art styles and methods, of art history, and of the artist himself.

3 Besides moral or spiritual improvement there is growth in appreciation of beauty, improvement of artistic perception and judgment, of eye and taste.

By many persons it would be asserted that this special work of the art section is its chief or only raison d'être.

With the third, moral or spiritual improvement, as distinguished from artistic, your selection will have very little to do. It is true that, as is said in Colonel Newcome's favorite quotation, "Ingenuas didicisse fideliter artes," etc., "to have faithfully learned the ingenuous arts softens manners and does not allow men to be savages." Undoubtedly familiarity with and love for great works of art in the main tend to disincline a man for mob violence or for gross enjoyments, to encourage the kindlier feelings and religious reverence where they already exist; though it must be acknowledged that even great knowledge of art or exquisite skill as an artist is not incompatible in certain natures with complete selfishness. But admitting all the softening, refining, elevating effect of art, you can not make this to any

extent a guide to your selection. With obvious exceptions, you can not say this picture will have such and such a moral and that picture will have such another effect. The power of a picture in that way depends on its adaptation to the beholder's moral state. The effect is unseen, unconscious usually, cumulative, working slowly, "like the gentle rain from heaven," and is greatest where it is least needed. It exists, but it is not to be planned for; you must take it as it comes, and be glad to believe — by faith, not by sight — that it will come.

It is different with the other two objects, pleasure and instruction, whether artistic or general. They must affect choice very seriously, and how they affect it depends largely on the character of the public to which you are to minister. Obviously it would make a great difference whether you were to provide for a tribe of savages who have not yet learned to read pictorial representation, who do not even know that certain black tracings mean a tree and a certain mass of color a cow (for there are said to be a few so brute-like), or for the persons whose taste is perfectly satisfied with the chromo that is "given away with every pound of coffee," or for children, who, even if they are yet largely in the savage state, are impressionable, and can be led in time into the region of art, or for those who are already there, whether in the art clubs or as students in the schools, or for highly cultivated amateurs, broad-minded and liberal or narrow-minded, exclusive, and hard to please, as the case may be, or, finally, for artists, the most difficult critics of all.

If you had to deal only with one of these classes your work would not be easy; but in the large cities always, and sometimes even in small towns, you have to deal with all but the first.

The first thing, then, is to ascertain whether your public has any definite art character, any knowledge of art, any traditions of art study and taste. If it has, you will of course

try to satisfy its wants; and if they appear to you a little one sided, you will, so far as funds allow, try to broaden them and lead them into new art fields. If, for example, they care only for painting, and are indifferent to sculpture and architecture, a few well chosen Perry prints of these arts or a subscription to the Library Art Club may give them a chance to open their eyes.

It is not easy to ascertain the art status of a community, and whatever is found out is true only for the time, for the status is constantly changing. When I first heard of the Forbes Library I knew nothing of Northampton; but in 24 years at the Boston Athenæum I found that almost every one likes a little good art, so I suggested to the Forbes trustees that they should have some photographs of paintings and architecture and that I (then in Paris) should buy them. By the time they were bought I had become librarian and brought many art books and about a thousand photographs home with me, and at once began to exhibit them. Till then Northampton had done nothing special in art. Art was not studied in the schools or clubs, there was no art section in the city library. We kept on exhibiting photographs and writing about them in the newspapers and forcing art on the people; and the result is that now there are five clubs studying art, there is a most excellent teacher in the schools, and the schoolroom walls are covered with pictures and casts borrowed from the Forbes Library. It is very unusual not to find some one studying in the art room, and often the small place is crowded. A few days ago 163 persons had out art books and 324 persons had out photographs. Unluckily for our credit the count was made just after the teachers had returned their books in preparation for Easter vacation; but there were still out 2479 photographs and 377 books on art. Among photographs returned the attendant remembered 100 after Raphael's paintings and 97 of Rome (pictures and architecture).

You will notice that I did not do what I said was neces-

sary — find out first the character of the people. I bought for a long time on general principles, getting the things I thought they would like or ought to like, practically, I suppose, what I liked myself; but now I am attending very closely to their tastes, observing what sort of things they are interested in, so that when they come with specific wants we may be provided with the best we can get in those lines.

Preparation. If the librarian is to select wisely he must know a good deal about art. It does not take long to learn a little and it is a constant delight to learn more in this fascinating field. To ask you to educate yourself in art is not, then, demanding something extravagant or disagreeable. The man who has an ear for music, an eye for art and for nature, and a sympathy with human nature need not fear a dull ending for his life. I remember hearing Mr Thies, curator of the collection of engravings bequeathed by Mr Gray to Harvard College Library, describe the eagerness with which Mr Gray, then on his death bed, seized a fine engraving that had just arrived and the intense pleasure with which he commented on its beauties.

To stand for the first time before the Sistine Madonna at Dresden, absolutely fearing to raise one's eyes to look at it, to wander through a foreign gallery in a state of intoxication with which wine has nothing to do, to take up an etching with a quiver of admiration, to be awed in a French cathedral, pleased with the temples at Paestum, charmed by the fancies of a Japanese design — these are the privileges of the art lover and worth all the time and attention spent in self-educaion, if that very effort were not in itself a pleasure. Some may even find in it a happiness apart from the trials, sorrows, disappointments, drudgery of existence, an interior life of enchantment, a fool's paradise, if you will, chimerical and yet very real — while it lasts.

Art teaches one to see. This it does in several ways. The first is by depicting objects much more distinctly than we

actually see them and so calling attention to appearances which we should see if we looked at them carefully with a distance glass. This is the unnatural clearness which we find in the work of the preimpressionist and antiimpressionist schools. Another way is by isolating scenes and putting them on the walls, where we have to attend to them instead of glancing hastily about as we ordinarily do; the artist is a friend pointing out to us the beauties of the scene. Third, by the study of books written for beginners in art showing the effect of perspective in representing distance, of shades in representing form, and the existence of reflected lights and of harmonies and contrasts in color and the beauties of individual tints, all matters which are usually taken merely as guides in the business of life and not thought of at all as themselves facts worth knowing, any more than we think of letters in reading or of vocal organs in speaking. Now for most people it is not worth while to think much about letters and vocal organs after they have learned to spell, to talk or to sing; these are not agreeable objects of contemplation in themselves. But the attention once called to nature, it is an unfailing source of pleasure, a life admission to an inexhaustible museum.

Art, I repeat, teaches us to see. As has been well said, "Mr Whistler's art has educated the younger generation to a new perception of beauty. In his wonderful nocturnes he has fixed on canvas the blue transparent darkness of the night as it envelops the city and is reflected in the gas-lit river — the darkness through which you descry the dim forms of tall bridges and phantom boats, of illusive spires and dream-like palaces." So writes Mr Rummell in his "American Painters." Hundreds had seen these things before Whistler, but thousands had not. I do not doubt that the idea of looking for beauty in a London fog came to many for the first time from the sight of his nocturnes, for all of us go through the world with our eyes half shut and see only a small part of what is around us till some one

calls our attention to it. So if any one wants to enjoy nature to the full he can help himself by studying art, and if any one wants to enjoy art he will do so the more fully the better he knows nature.

You must come to your work from the inside, not from the outside. When you yourself are a seeker in art and a lover of every kind of art — when you live the mystery of Rembrandt and the serenity of Raphael, the light cheerfulness of Corot and the gloom of Millet, when the contorted bodies and sad faces of the English preraphaelites or the meagerness and ugliness of the Cologne artists are as dear to you as the graceful lines of the Grecian statues or the perfect beauty of Raphael or Titian and you feel the spirit expressed in each, you may be able to serve your clients well. You can not succeed as long as you hand out your pictures as so many sheets of stationery.

How, then, shall you learn to see and love the good things in pictures? By looking at them. There is no other way. You may get a little assistance by reading the fine things which critics have written about them; but if I judge by my own experience, you will not at first see any of the things they see. You might as well expect to learn to enjoy a great piece of music by reading Philip Hale's programs to the Boston Symphony concerts. No, look, look, look; gaze and absorb. What you find out for yourself will be much more than what you learn from a teacher.

Emerson said half humorously to his friend at Ole Bull's first concert, "Nudge me at the best passages that I may thrill at the right moment." One seeks such advice from experts to save one's vanity. One does not want to be ridiculous in his admiration. But such help, though it is good for the time and assists in training the taste, is not for permanent dependence. In the long run one wants to know himself what is best, to thrill without being nudged.

Nevertheless, have a teacher if you can, have many teachers, to supplement one another's shortcomings and

neutralize one another's prejudices. As often as you can, hear what a painter has to say about a painting. Talk with an art critic, an art teacher, a friend. Hear what everybody has to say and compare it with what you think yourself.

The gist of what I have said lies in four short sentences:

Open your eyes and see.

Read much but look more.

See for yourself; he who does not does not see at all.

Don't try to criticize; try to enjoy.

Or, to sum it all in one, Do your own thrilling.

Art history. There is a great deal of pleasure to be got from tracing the progress of painting, noting the continuity of art history, how today proceeds from yesterday and that from the day before, how one painter influenced another, how the conception changed and methods changed with it; in short, in tracing the evolution of style. If one can do that — but he can not unless he gives time to it — one is much better able to understand any one painter.

It is well to form classifications of styles and note how one melts into another; to construct for your own use little "philosophies of art history," so to speak. They may not be correct, for the data on which they rest must for a long time be incomplete; but you will learn a great deal in making them, and they will serve, as do working hypotheses in science, to enable the mind to bear up under a great load of otherwise disconnected detail.

For instance, speaking broadly, the course of any style of architecture could be said to be construction, ornamented construction, constructed ornament. At first construction is the main thing; the problems to be solved are its problems, and the buildings show clearly that the chief effects are constructive: ruggedness, strength, massiveness, grandeur, impressiveness. Then, these problems having been solved, ornament, which of course existed before but subordinately, becomes more and more the main thought of the architect. And finally, all legitimate forms of ornament having been

used, in the effort to get something new, ornament, instead of being an outcome and a revealer of the form, is heaped on independently, overpowering and concealing the structure. The first stage is specially visible in the Gothic, whose whole existence came from a peculiarity of construction — the working out of the capabilities of the pointed arch. The last stage is not very apparent in that style, because just when people were getting tired of Gothic and before its degeneration had gone very far (in the later flamboyant in France and the extreme perpendicular in England) the revived interest in Greek and Roman literature and art came suddenly, and the Gothic building ceased at once and had no time to become perverted. The Renaissance hardly had the first period at all, because it was not, like the Gothic, an original style, but a mere imitation of the Roman imitation of the Greek, and because it is essentially a style of ornament rather than of construction. Take, for example, the solidity, strength, trustworthiness of the Roman arch, and see how the late Renaissance used it as an ornament, with a slice cut out of the middle, where the keystone should be, its strength and all its beauty of form gone. The very foundation of the style should not have been treated with such indignity.

In painting, too, there is a progression : first feeling without beauty (the preraphaelites), then beauty with sentiment, then beauty with sentimentality, then cold beauty, then neither beauty nor feeling. This is a crude generalization, representing only part of the course of modern painting, and having many exceptions ; but it may assist in classifying the painters and tracing the progress from the painters before Raphael to the classicists and realists.

Purchase. Most libraries have a proportionately small fund for art, and librarians must make money go as far as possible. To this end get first some striking pictures of the great masters ; for example, one of Braun's large carbons from Rembrandt, one of the Berlin Photographic plates of

Burne-Jones, preferably something not very common, that its effect may not be dulled by familiarity. Two of such quality you may afford. Then spend the rest of your money on something smaller and cheaper, getting many artists and many scenes in forms that may not satisfy but are very convenient to use.

I recommend variety. To illustrate again by literature: if I could buy only two books for the library, and if one by Howells, let us say, good but not popular, and another by Kipling, good and very popular, were offered, I should buy both rather than two copies of the Kipling. It seems to me better to broaden one's field and the taste of one's public than to concentrate efforts on fully satisfying fads and freaky tastes, or rather, I should say, pursue a middle course. So with pictures. But pursuing a middle course is a work of judgment and of tact.

Do not get things whose value is mainly artificial, depending on the fashion of the moment. Avoid the follies of the editions de luxe. These editions are, indeed, usually (not always) better than the ordinary edition, but the increase in price is almost without exception far in excess of the increase in value. They are, in fact, made up to sell.

The illustrations in art books will not answer all our needs. Books are not convenient to pass round at a lecture or lesson and can not be hung on the walls of a schoolroom. And if one is in search of a particular picture or building it is not so easy to find the representations of it in the art histories as to go direct to a box where they are all brought together.

You will of course wish to be patriotic and not to fill your phototheks solely with work of foreign artists. But it is right that we should go abroad first; in doing so we are following the course of history. When we have learned foreign art we can better understand our own, both in its imitation and its originality. It is not easy to get representations of

American art, for as yet not many of our artists have been copied, and compared with the foreign photographs, ours are dear. There are, however, among the cheaper copies about a score of Perry prints and some Harper prints. A good way to fill up gaps in the collection is to put into the art room numbers of magazines in which illustrated articles have been devoted to single artists.

One important selection for you to make is the choice of dealers. As a rule, almost without exception, do not buy art books of canvassers. Even if the books are what you want you will usually pay more than is necessary, and if you are not sure of your subject they will talk you into buying inferior books or works that you do not really need.

It would be wrong to assert that no traveling art agents are honest, but it is certain that they are exposed to strong temptations to impose on the ignorant or the half-educated librarian. We are such easy prey. We know something about books, printed literature, and naturally we think we know something about printed art. If it were a question of choosing a statue or a painting we should feel our incompetence and seek advice; but a proof engraving, an etching, a drawing, a water color even, we fancy we understand and so step into the trap he sets. He finds that a little adroit flattery, a little surprise to find one who knows so much in a small town, or, on the other tack, the occasional use of phrases like "of course you know" or "I need not tell *you*," combined with a glib tongue and an array of printed recommendations and signed subscription books, will enable him to sell, at anywhere from twice to ten times their commercial value, sets of late impressions of engravings which may have been of merit in the early state of the plates, sets of so-called "drawings" which are merely photographic or lithographic copies possibly touched up by hand, "etchings" whose only connection with the needle is through the heliogravure process, "water colors" which will have to be

classified under color-printing. He finds us, I say, an easy market on which to unload second-rate goods or fake art. What wonder if he yields to the temptation.

Let me tell you some of my escapes. A German woman came to me with a "rare pamphlet many hundred years old," its age, she said, shown by its rude pictures and stained covers, which she would sell, being the last copy she had, for $15, though it had cost her $25. It proved to be "Schlau schläuer, am schläusten" by Seyppel, a work in which the old style of printing, illustration, binding had been intentionally imitated. I happened to be standing near Kayser's "Bücher-Lexikon." I took down the proper volume and pointed out to her that she had been very unfortunate in giving $25 for the pamphlet, as it was published in Düsseldorf for 4 marks. She turned, and without a word put the pamphlet back in her pack. I then saw that she had dozens of them. This was so clumsy an imposture that it is hard to believe that any librarian was taken in by it; but no doubt she sold her goods to somebody.

A better contrived story was told me by a traveling salesman. His statement was that an "International Society of Artists" had got up a portfolio of 37 etchings by the greatest French etchers after the greatest paintings by the greatest French artists, both giving their services, so that the profits of the venture might send poor young artists to the Paris exhibition of 1900 (this was in 1898). There was also a quarto volume of text by many writers, edited by F. G. Dumas and published by Baschet at Paris, without date. I have forgotten the price. It was probably three or four hundred dollars. I let the man talk, and looked at the engravings. On several of them I noticed in very small type "Copyrighted by" some society whose name I have forgotten, but not the International Society of Artists, in 1883; that is to say, these engravings, said to be issued to send poor artists to the exposition in 1900, had been before the public for 15 years. And in turning over the text I

found one of the lives signed by E. Duranty, who died in 1881, that is, 19 years before the exhibition.

Another man came to me with an oak box containing 30 drawings by Felix O. C. Darley illustrative of Shakspere, the story in this case being that Darley himself finished only 381 sets before his sudden death, that they were subscribed for at gradually increasing prices from $650 to $3280 a set; the seller showed me the signed subscription blanks specifying the sums. One of these bore the name of a librarian now dead. I hope he subscribed at the lowest sum, for his successor assures me that there is nothing of Darley in the copy but the design and Darley's signature, the rest being a lithographic reproduction. He also points out that two copies sold last year at auction for $65 and $80 respectively. The set was offered to me as a great bargain at $510; and as I demurred, the price was reduced to $450, $350, and finally $250. The agent lugged away his great bargain.

It may be asked why, if the imitation is so good that it can not be distinguished from the original except by an expert, it is not just as well to buy it. Will it not give as much pleasure and as much instruction? There is something to be said on that elsewhere. But note that I am not objecting to buying these things but to giving ten times their commercial value, and thereby preventing buying other things that are equally needed.

Architecture. I wish to say a word about several special arts.

In architecture it is as much easier than formerly to make adequate provision for students as it is in painting. Besides the illustrations in the excellent histories there are for slender purses very good reproductions in the Perry prints (1c, 2c and 5c), though the choice is as yet somewhat limited. Photographs of the French churches one can get in the Robert Mieusement series for 50c each; but if a friend will select for one in Paris, the N. D. postal cards

give an admirable representation of French ecclesiastic architecture (and civil too, but it is seldom worth having) at 2c a card or 20c a dozen, with a further discount if one buys several hundred. R. D. Cleveland of Hinsdale, Ohio, issues a very good series of photographs, largely architectural, taken in France and England in 1900. Unmounted they cost $4 a dozen or $30 a hundred.

I must not omit the beautiful series of architectural photographs taken by E. Soderholtz in 1901 and sold by the Soule Co. I think at 50c each, nor the striking California pictures of scenery and the old Spanish missions, published by M. P. Elder and Morgan Shepard of San Francisco, called the "J. I. S." photos and costing from 50c to $2 each.

I should advise, as I did in regard to paintings, that the poor library should get a few striking pictures of famous buildings and then as many as possible of a cheaper sort.

The richer library will pursue the same policy, only on a larger scale; trying always to get specimens of the best of every age, and, as in painting, after filling up the stock of the best known and most admired kinds, you will get the out of the way, the less studied, to surprise, to broaden, often to delight your public, without too much regard for your own taste. For my part I love those old churches in the romanesque style, which preceded the Gothic in France. Their massive walls, fortresslike, their stout round arches, their rude ornament, so simple yet so rich, their quaint sculpture, almost savage but sincere, the relics of paintings on the walls — all these give me a pleasure which not even the loveliness of the Gothic can surpass. They are the miracle plays of architecture, an *Everyman* in stone. You should surely have some of these. Get the façade of Poictiers, Angoulême, and the sculptures at the portal of Chartres, the domes of Périgueux and the tympanum of Vézelay or Le Mans, and the capitals of Autun, and add the church at Iffley or the staircase at Canterbury, and as many more as you can afford.

But you will have a more admiring public for the Gothic, that marvel in which a wall of glass supports a roof of stone. Get some of that too, Amiens, Rheims, Rouen, Chartres, Laon, and the best English cathedrals, and possibly one or two from the countries where the Gothic made little progress — Spain, Italy, Germany — to show the difference of styles; Cologne, for example, where the ill-advised finishers made the two towers exactly alike, substituting classic regularity and repetition for the harmony in variety which, like nature's, is the very essence of the Gothic. Even these few examples may show certain national characteristics — the German force, the Spanish extravagance, the Italian profusion, as the English cathedrals in their present state are monuments of English respectability, and the French exhibit a combination of power and ingenuity with lightness of hand and sureness of taste.

There is nothing, perhaps, more beautiful than a Greek temple, but when one has seen one Ionic Greek temple one has seen all Ionic Greek temples. It is a case of *toujours perdrix*. The lover of variety, therefore, will not rest content without massive Egypt, barbaric India, quaint China or Japan, and the strangely attractive missions of our own California.

Portraits. The artist, they say, puts something of himself into his pictures; in his portraits specially he puts his own character. It must be so, for he will see what he sympathizes with, and he will sympathize with what he is in common with his subject. But this does not mean that the portrait is untruthful. Character has many sides, and for each artist there are certain traits with which he is most successful. A prevailing style of face is to be found even in the greatest portrait painters. You will soon learn to recognize the dignity of Velasquez, the grace of Van Dyck, the heartiness of Hals, the strength of Dürer, the strong sagacity of Rembrandt's earlier portraits, the intense sadness of his later faces.

But what in the genius is greatness of achievement in special directions becomes limitation in the inferior artists. Monoprosopoeia sets in and is wearisome. One soon tires of the eternal Gibson girl and the two — or at most three — faces of Du Maurier.

In turning over the pages of a book lately, I came across a portrait to me unknown of one of the mistresses of one of the Louis — I can not recollect which, but a very able woman. I had seen portraits of her before, with elaborately dressed hair, a court dress, and a court face. This one was taken in her early days before she had schooled herself to express nothing. In her mobile, fascinating face you saw that it was not so much beauty as intellect and will that had brought her to power. That is the kind of portrait that is wanted for the library. And for the walls nothing but the best, for it is in portraits more than in any other branch of art that you must require genius ; the portrait that has none is deader than a doornail. The large portrait for the walls, the miniature for the show case, the ordinary portrait by the ordinary man for the boxes, where it will be kept with the real portraits which the library owns in too small size for exhibition.

Water colors, engraving, etching, wood engraving. In water colors you look for less solidity, less reality of presentation than in oil paintings, with more delicacy, but there may be also breadth and vigor, and in the best there are delightful combinations of color. In general, however, water colors are beyond the means of libraries, and reproductions of water colors do not differ much from reproductions of oils.

As a means of reproducing paintings the engraving is fast yielding to the photograph. The engraver puts something of himself into his copy. *Traduttore traditore.* The photograph, it is true, has its infidelities ; the different sensitiveness of the plate to different colors distorts the values ; yet in the hands of a master and with all the modern dis-

coveries, it comes much nearer than the engraving ever did. However, he who can will secure both versions of the great pictures; he will not disdain Unger's etchings because he has Braun's carbons.

But the engraving for its own sake, as itself a work of art, has lost none of its attraction, and has, unfortunately for us, added much to its price. You will have to remember that you are not "collectors." Only the richest libraries can afford to indulge in fine impressions, first states, proofs before letters; and even they must for such luxuries rely chiefly on gifts and bequests. Let the collector collect for you. Do not attempt to rival him in the auction room or the dealers' shops.

Still fine impressions are in the highest degree desirable, and the librarian will do well to train himself, so far as he has opportunity, in the judgment of engravings. In a good impression the plate shows no sign of wear, the light and shade have all their value and the lines are intact. One knows wear by a want of clearness where clearness ought to be, and in very bad cases the plate looks as if it had been rubbed or had even received a blow. Even if one is never to exercise his knowledge in buying, it is a great pleasure to be able to feel the difference between different copies of the same engraving and thoroughly to enjoy the best because it is the best.

Etching is one of the most artistic forms of art, but not appreciated to its value by the general public. For this reason as well as the high prices for the best work it is not to be thought of for a small library.

Wood engraving in its best specimens is another luxury beyond our reach. The Jost Ammans and the Dürers we can not afford as a rule, but good photographic reproductions are to be found in the more modern histories of great woodcutters. There are charming woodcut copies in Chatto and Jackson's "Treatise on Wood Engraving," and there is a fairly good and very cheap series published at Leipzig by

J. J. Weber, under the title "Meisterwerke der Holzschneidekunst." But in a small library one good history of wood engraving is all that is needed.

For every kind of engraving the photograph is doing the same service as it does for painting. The reproductions of Rembrandt's etchings by Amand-Durand, for instance, are hardly distinguishable from the originals. The heliotype and the photograph both represent the line engraving remarkably well, much better than paintings can be reproduced, because engravings have no color to be lost or converted into exaggerated shadows.

Original drawings. Original drawings we hardly want for *our* collections; as unique objects they can not be lent and must be consulted with such precautions that for ordinary purposes of the library they are useless. This is fortunate because we could not get many. But good reproductions of drawings, as fit for uses of study and almost as enjoyable as the originals, can be easily procured. One good collection is the "Handzeichnungen alter Meister aus der Albertina und anderen Sammlungen, hrsg. von Schönbrunner und Meder," Wien, 1895, etc. Each number has 10 to 15 facsimiles and costs 3 marks. The yearly volume is 42 marks. Each plate is carefully labeled with the name of the school to which it belongs, so that the plates can easily be arranged by schools and subarranged by artists. The facsimiles, which are in the tints of the originals, are excellently done. There is another collection, better and costlier: "Zeichnungen alter Meister im Kupferstichkabinet der kaiserlichen Museen zu Berlin, hrsg. von Lippmann." Each part contains 10 plates and costs 15 marks. The publication was begun in 1902 by G. Grote in Berlin.

There are also volumes giving the complete drawings of Rembrandt, of Da Vinci, and others, which it is not needful to enumerate. They are very expensive and almost without call in the ordinary library. The Library of Congress, Boston Public Library, Harvard College Library, New York

Public Library will, of course, have them all. The thorough student must consult them in those great collections. Twenty-five years ago he would have had to go to Europe and consult the originals, for the facsimiles did not exist.

Book illustration. The division of book illustration is provided for to a certain extent by the necessary purchases of the library. If more can be afforded a most interesting field of collection is opened, which has been thus far somewhat neglected by our librarians in their attention to more important things. It is not often great art, but it is art in one of its most engaging forms. There are two objections to making this collection for a public library: first that book illustration is not pure art, just as the music drama is not pure music, a large part of its interest lying in its interrelation with the text, so that it has not been thought of in connection with the art section; and secondly that this text wears out the book. But in the case of very pretty or otherwise interesting illustrations of children's books or popular works, such as those by Crane, Kate Greenaway and Hugh Thomson, the library that can afford to should get two copies, one to be given up to destructive use, the other to be preserved carefully in the art section.

The field, as I said, is a fascinating one. It unites many sources of pleasure: the purely artistic interest of tracing the alteration of style; the marked individuality of the illustrators, who work perhaps with a freer hand than those who are engaged on larger and more imposing pictures; the study of character, which is often more fully exhibited than in more ambitious paintings; the preservation of manners and costume of the age, and often a degree of humor hardly to be paralleled except by the Dutch masters. The German Chodowiecki, the French Eisen of the 18th century, Tony Johannot and Gavarni in the next, Vierge and Leloir now, and a host of others, and our own American Abbey and Garrett, and more, whom I can not begin to mention, will give you a chance for every variety of taste.

Photographs from nature. Last we come to photographs. I do not mean photographs of pictures, of engravings, of architecture, that is, reproductions of art, but photographs of things. I know the artists used vigorously and are still inclined to deny that photography is an art. But can any fair-minded person look at the modern photographic triumphs in portraiture and landscape and refuse their makers the title of artist? It is not worth while to dispute whether the imitation of form and texture by the aid of chemicals and the sun's rays and skilful manipulation is Art (with a capital A). Grant that so far photography is nature. Is there no art in the pose and the management of the light? In landscape the choice of the point of view, which corresponds to composition in painting, and the choice of the moment when light and shade are at their best, if this is not art what is it? Look at a badly posed sitter, look at a badly composed scene, and you will see where the art should have come in.

You will then in your *art* department be justified in buying good landscapes, such as the best of Nutting's "Nature Studies" (exhibited at Magnolia in 1902) for sale by H. K. Turner, park views and the J. I. S. California views and some of the Hinsdale French and English views. Indeed you would not be justified in not buying such.

Regents' list of 100 pictures suitable for high schools. Recently the regents of New York published a list of 100 works of art (paintings, sculpture and architecture) suitable for display in public schools. This list was greatly ridiculed in the newspapers because supposed to be offered as a list of the only presentable pictures and not an attempt (not unsuccessful) to compile a short, safe, unobjectionable list. The chief causes of rejection were:

1 Artistic demerit. As selectors will always disagree, this point is not worth discussing, specially in a short list.

2 Nudity. Since objections might be made on this ground by parents or teachers, and since there are plenty of good

pictures which are not nude, was it not well to make this a ground of exclusion?

3 Possible offense to Hebrews[1] from works the subjects of which are taken from the New Testament; certainly a reasonable ground. When we exclude protestant bibles from schools on account of catholic protests, it would be very inconsistent to admit catholic saints and madonnas, which must be intensely displeasing to the strict Hebrew; not of course to the liberal, cultured Jew, who would not object to a schoolhouse full of madonnas and saints, but to the ignorant emigrant, who will not let his children go to the slum settlement house if there is a single madonna on the walls, or to the man who, with a muttered curse on all Christians, shoulders off the sidewalk the settlement teacher who is instructing his children in sewing, cooking or drawing.

For the schools, then, the regents' criteria were expedient. Libraries stand on a very different footing. They are working for a different public and with different purposes. It was very important that the regents should include nothing that could be seriously objected to; it is one of the purposes of the library to teach people not to object.

Do not, then, take this list as a complete guide in selection.[2] You might as well undertake to found a library with Lubbock's Hundred best books. Of course you want those best books and these best pictures. You want many more and not necessarily these first. Indeed if I were limited to 100 books I certainly would not buy Lubbock's list unless I wanted the library not to be used. Cultured people have read as many of the books on that list as they wish to

[1] The exclusion of certain religious pictures was not simply nor primarily to regard Hebrew prejudice, but to avoid offending the prejudices of *any* religion or sect. Ed.

[2] The purpose of the list was to put before schools 100 good pictures unobjectionable from any reasonable point of view. Out of regard to religious and ethical bias, it omits many of the most famous and artistically finest works. Ed.

and uncultured people do not want to read most of them and will not.

We need not pay much attention to the regents' criteria, as some of them are quite aside from the conditions under which the library is working. We do not wish to have pictures which are unworthy the artist's fame unless we are trying to get the artist's complete works. That criterion is then good for a library. But for the rest it is not necessary to exclude Murillo's and Raphael's madonnas for fear of shocking protestants and Hebrews, representations of heathen gods as offensive to Christians, war pictures as painful to advocates of peace, or the modest nude for fear of Anthony Comstock. We shall usually find that our adult visitors are enlightened enough to enjoy the art of pictures whose subjects they do not sympathize with, and for the young it is not altogether the best preparation for life to close their eyes or to have them bandaged. So while excluding what everybody excludes, we may put on our walls what every gallery admits.

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